Star Wars

UNTOLD STORIES *from* every episode & SECRETS *from* The RISE of SKYWALKER

BY *James Hibberd*

+ *The* BEST POP CULTURE *of the* DECADE

Entertainment WEEKLY

COVER 3 *of* 3



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COVER 1 *of* 3




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George Lucas and Mark Hamill filming *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* in Tunisia in 1976

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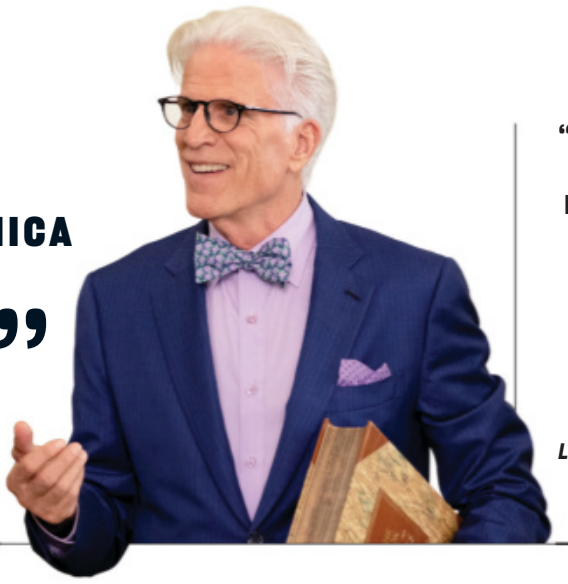
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THIS FALL'S SHARPEST LINES

Sound Bites

"ARE YOU GOING TO SIT THERE AND SAY THAT EVERY SINGLE FRIEND BELONGS IN HELL? I MEAN, MAYBE **ROSS** AND **RACHEL**...AND **MONICA** AND **JOEY**, AND DEFINITELY **CHANDLER**. BUT P·H·O·E·B·E·?"

*—Michael (**Ted Danson**), making his case for humanity, on* The Good Place



"You name me one lady math person—and don't say *Hidden Figures*, that was science fiction."

*—Ruby (**Jenifer Lewis**), delivering a hot take, on* black-ish



"Always charge a guy with a gun.... With a knife, you run."

*—Jimmy Hoffa (**Al Pacino**), having just taken out a gunman, in* The Irishman



"Morning, darling. Tea?"

"Would anyone object if I have something stronger?"

"Coffee?"

*—The Queen Mother (**Marion Bailey**), misunderstanding what her daughter Margaret (**Helena Bonham Carter**) is requesting, on* The Crown



"IT WAS THE WORST MISTAKE OF MY LIFE, AND I ONCE PLAYED TWISTER WITH BRYAN SINGER...AT KEVIN SPACEY'S PARTY...FOR ANDY DICK'S EARLY PAROLE."

*—Mr. Peanutbutter (**Paul F. Tompkins**), apologizing for being unfaithful, on* BoJack Horseman

"YOU ARE AN EXOTIC VIETNAMESE BEAUTY. SCARLETT JOHANSSON WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE UNTIL TWITTER TOLD HER SHE COULDN'T."

*—Cam (**Eric Stonestreet**), complimenting his daughter, Lily (**Aubrey Anderson-Emmons**), on* Modern Family



What Line Is It Anyway?

Replace each letter with a different letter to solve the TV cryptogram. We've already given you three letters to start. Grab a pencil!

"_ O _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Q _ _ _ _ _ _ M _ _"

J A X R W V T W E G W X G A W H K X F W Z W



*—Emily (**Hailee Steinfeld**), being read one of her poems by a potential suitor, on* Dickinson

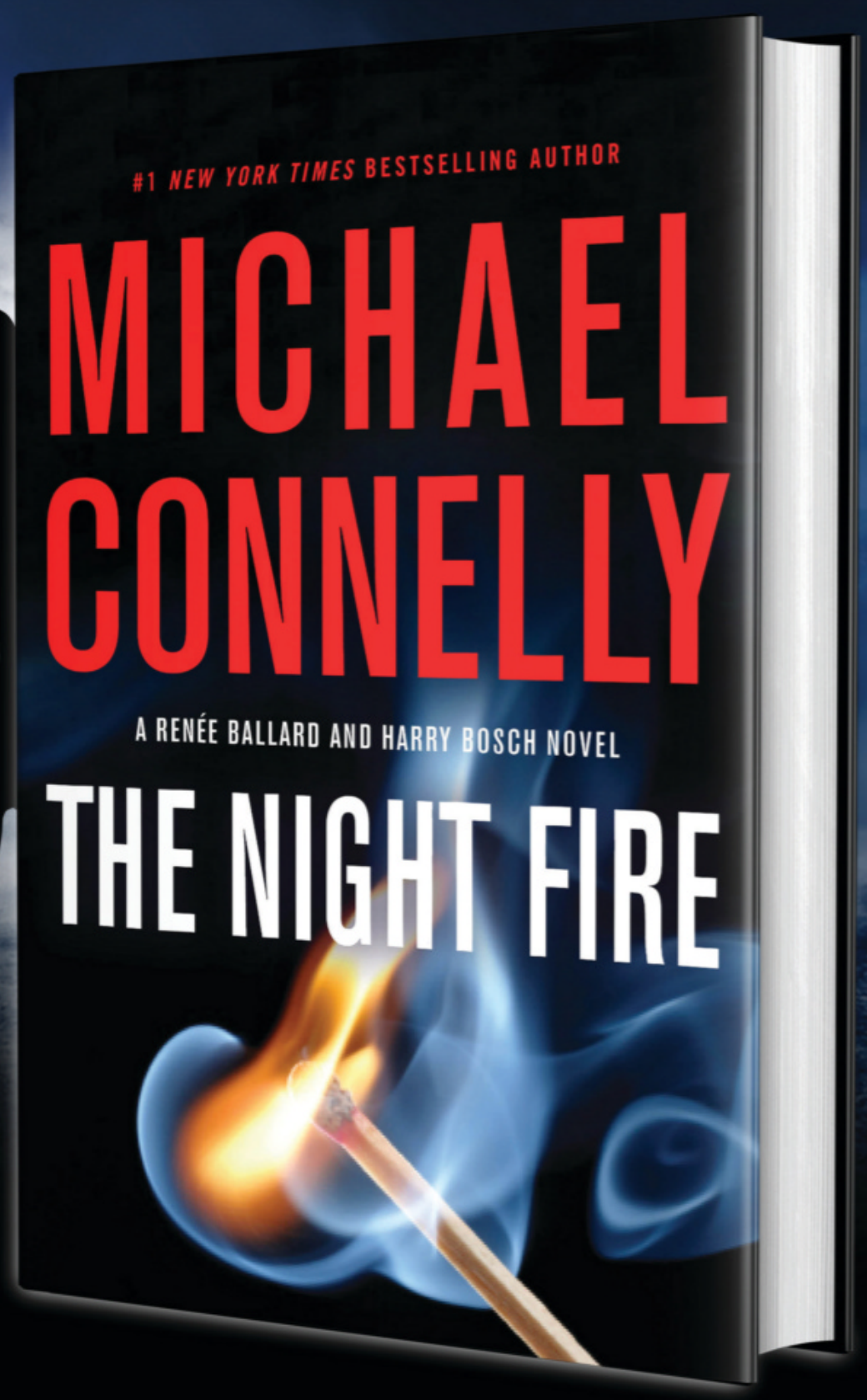
Answer: "I Love When People Quote Me"

THE GOOD PLACE: COLLEEN HAYES/NBC; BLACK-ISH: RAYMOND LIU/ABC; THE CROWN: DES WILLIE/NETFLIX; MODERN FAMILY: MITCH HAASETH/ABC; DICKINSON: APPLE

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Editor's Note

BY → JD HEYMAN @JDHEYMAN



GIVE US A LISTEN When it comes to great audio on pop culture, we've got you covered, with fun shows on SiriusXM On Demand, plus our own original podcasts, including *EW's Binge* featuring *Schitt's Creek* co-creator Dan Levy (see page 18 for more with his costar Catherine O'Hara), and season 4 of *The Awardist*, with a Taron Egerton interview and the skinny on this year's Oscar race. For these and other EW listens, subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to listen to *The Awardist* now

My *Star Wars*

THE ESQUIRE THEATRE INTRODUCED ME TO WONDER. When I was a baby brother dragged around by several harried big sisters, I was taken to Saturday matinees at a grand old movie house in Clifton, the official Greenwich Village of Cincinnati. Even now, from what amounts to a heartbreaking distance, I can conjure up what it felt like to be totally transfixed as I sat sandwiched into an unpredictably springy seat with my feet grazing a quite gooey floor. The Esquire gave me *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*, *Godzilla vs. Megalon*, and Richard Donner's *Superman*. To the boy I was (and mostly still am), they were all marvels. Yet none of them equaled *Star Wars*. You see, I met what is now called *Episode IV: A New Hope* at a most perfect age, in precisely the right spot (the very front row, looking up). Debate George Lucas' gifts to civilization all you like. For me, it boils down to sitting next to my pal Eric Chatterjee, watching Leia say "Good luck" to Luke right before the pair of them—*whoosh*—swing across a gaping chasm as John Williams' score soars. In that moment, I was charged with enough kinetic delight to blast out of my unreliable chair and into space with them. And so (possibly like you) I kept going back, again and again, for another hit.

So here we are, all these decades later, at *Episode IX*, or *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*, which will bring us to the end of a story cycle that began on May 25, 1977. Obviously, *Star Wars* stories will go on and on, but in many ways, my first sweet *Star Wars*, of Luke, Leia, Han, Chewie, and the droids we were most definitely looking for, is passing from the stage. Most everything has been written and said about what George Lucas gave us, and yet, we keep talking about it, because *Star Wars*—epic, silly, lyrical, hokey, hopeful—is joy.

On this matter of the heart, I can't be a wonk. I speak no Shyriiwook, I'm not a member of the 501st Legion, and truth be told, I find Yoda's grammar more than a little annoying. Yet I know with certainty that the Christmas I got a Kenner Death Star Space Station (with trash compactor and monster) was the best one ever. Of the tackle box full of action figures I once greedily collected, I now possess a sole surviving Jawa, in his ratty little robe. But no matter where I go, I take him with me, an artifact from a sweeter time. I went along in life, and have been lucky enough to meet many ex-kids who have similar *Star Wars* memories. A great many of them have gone on to tell fantastical stories of their own. For that—and the wonder—I feel a gratitude as vast as any faraway galaxy.



JD HEYMAN



***STAR WARS* COVERS** In 29 years, EW has featured *Star Wars* on its cover 20 times, but with *The Rise of Skywalker* we knew we had to bring something special. To celebrate *Episode IX*, executive editor and creative director Tim Leong worked with Disney and Lucasfilm to bring you three special covers honoring a constellation of cherished heroes and dreaded villains from the beloved saga. To collect the entire set, go to backissues.ew.com. © 2019 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM, All Rights Reserved.

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BEST OF THE DECADE

FIND AND GEEK

We still don't know what to call this decade (*the teens? the tens? It's not the aughts... right?*), but we've dedicated our entire Must List to the pop culture gems it birthed. Can you spot some of our faves?

1. Two Rami Maleks **2.** One Eleven
3. One Direction

Illustration by Ulises Farinas
Colors by Melody Often




2010
2019
THE HATE U GIVE

THE MUSIC List

2010–2019

BEST OF THE DECADE EDITION



EDITED BY
MARC SNETIKER
@MARCSNETIKER



№ 1

HOW HEROES RESCUED HOLLYWOOD

THE SNAP

THE BIGGEST FILM FRANCHISE OF all time started with a box of scraps. Just as Robert Downey Jr.'s Tony Stark cobbled together a supersuit in 2008's *Iron Man*, Marvel Studios built an empire from a B-list band of characters. When the comics publisher launched its film studio over a decade ago, its starriest heroes—Spider-Man, X-Men, the Fantastic Four—were licensed to other companies. Now, the 23-film Marvel Cinematic Universe has grown from underdog to box office behemoth, turning characters like Groot into household names and shaping Hollywood's future (while raking in more than $22 billion worldwide). "After the first *Avengers* movie worked, I realized there was a chance at something that's never been done before," Captain America, alias Chris Evans, tells EW. "And quite possibly might never be done again."

In 2008, Marvel Studios' first goal was simply to get *Iron Man* into theaters—but studio president Kevin Feige had a more ambitious vision: a web of films set in the same universe, with characters moving between movies, and stories intersecting into one massive narrative. "The dream was always that the sky's the limit," explains Feige. "We thought, wouldn't it be amazing to re-create these splash pages from the comics, where you can barely count how many characters there are because the universe is that big and rich, and bring them all together for an event the size of an 'Infinity Gauntlet' story line?" Through post-credits scenes (that have since become expected of a blockbuster), the MCU laid the groundwork for these crossovers, teasing movies years down the line.

And then, the Snap happened. In 2018's *Avengers: Infinity War*, a purple sociopath named Thanos decimated everything Marvel built, reducing half the franchise to literal dust. It was the biggest cliffhanger since "Who Shot J.R.?" and it showed Marvel wasn't afraid to blindside audiences or upend expectations about superhero storytelling.

But then again, the MCU has always tried to Hulk-smash conventions. New points of view from directors like Ryan Coogler, Taika Waititi, and James Gunn allowed Marvel films to grow beyond the label of "superhero movies" and flourish within other genres, from '70s-inspired conspiracy thrillers to candy-colored buddy comedies. "They changed the way I viewed the scope of collaboration," says Evans. "The amount of creative minds from different mediums all coming together to achieve one goal is truly staggering." What also set the MCU's reign apart was its diverse stable of heroes; initially overwhelmingly white and male, the Avengers roster has since led the charge in representation. "When a movie works, you find yourself getting wrapped up in the protagonist's story, whether that protagonist shares your gender or your skin tone," Feige says.

Though many original Avengers hung up their suits after *Avengers: Endgame*, the MCU is far from finished. "I hope we can continue to do the unexpected and surprise people over the next 10 years," Feige says. So far, at least nine more films and eight Disney+ TV shows have been announced, focusing on both familiar faces and new heroes...ones who, hopefully, won't have to deal with any cataclysmic finger snaps this time. —*Devan Coggan*

BEST OF THE REST

These are a few of our *other* favorite things that shaped the decade

→ **WONDER WOMAN** Gal Gadot braved No Man's Land to prove the mettle of and market for female-powered superhero flicks. **SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE** Sony Animation (and Miles Morales) found astonishing ways to keep comic movies completely original while staying true to their visual roots.

ILLUSTRATION BY TIMBA SMITS



№ 2

THE TV THAT CHANGED TV

BATTLE OF THE BASTARDS

WHEN DAVID BENIOFF AND DAN Weiss pitched *Game of Thrones* to HBO in 2006, they made network execs a promise that wasn't true: They had no plans to break the budget by re-creating elaborate battle scenes from George R.R. Martin's novels. A decade later, the pair unveiled "Battle of the Bastards" in season 6. The episode was both a massive production as well as a monumental accomplishment in storytelling. Critics praised "Bastards" not just for its jaw-dropping action but for weaving character-driven twists, moving moments, and crowd-pleasing payoffs into all the mayhem. The episode was showered with seven Emmys (including for writing and directing) and erased any lingering doubts that a TV show could achieve real cinematic greatness. Even the competition agreed. "There are certain battle sequences committed to film that are unforgettable, and 'Battle of the Bastards' ranks with the best of them," says Netflix VP Channing Dungey. "Dave and Dan devoted a decade of their lives to *Game of Thrones*, and all that work is evident in what feels like the pinnacle moment of the series. The degree of difficulty here is just massive."

The battle itself took 25 days to shoot (unheard of for a TV action sequence) in rugged conditions in a rural valley in Northern Ireland. "Wet, muddy, windy, a bit grueling, occasionally painful," recalls director Miguel Sapochnik. "[It] was a meticulously planned war in every aspect. We were battling time, the elements, fatigue, and ourselves." Much of the burden was borne by Kit Harington, who had to wordlessly communicate Jon Snow's ever-shifting perspective on the fight while riding horses and swinging swords, including a stunning, long tracking shot where he hacked and slashed his way through a sea of enemies. Looking back, Harington is his harshest critic. "I loved it, and to everybody else it looks good," the actor says. "To me, I look at it and see the things I could have done better." And that was the real secret to pulling it off, an attitude pervasive among cast and crew: that nothing they did was ever quite good enough. —*James Hibberd*

→ **"OZYMANDIAS"** *Breaking Bad*'s third-to-last hour set a new standard for the poetic potential of Peak TV drama. **"TEDDY PERKINS"** Donald Glover turned creativity into high comedy art in *Atlanta*'s most attention-grabbing episode.

HELEN SLOAN/HBO

THE DECADE OF THE DIVA

Nº 3 Beyoncé

Even the corny haters who believe she's part of the Illuminati have to admit Queen Bey is the decade's defining artist—one whose songs, album rollouts, stage presence, and disruptive PR strategy influenced the way we've viewed music over the last 10 years.

In hindsight, Beyoncé began the 2010s relatively quietly (for her), dropping a vintage R&B album in *4* and setting the pre-Beychella gold standard for pop stars playing festivals with her 2011 Glastonbury set. Noteworthy events, of course, but far from the sensation she caused in 2013 when her self-titled visual album arrived without warning. Amazingly, all 14 of its songs came with their own music videos. Other artists copied Beyoncé's last-minute record drops, but her work took hold in more sweeping ways: through the use of the word *feminist* as both a political and branding statement; through the mining of her identity, race, and marriage in searing, brutal ways; and through ultimately being a bright beacon of hope for the marginalized. As she says in Netflix's *Homecoming*, the Bey-directed documentary on her globe-stopping 2018 Coachella performance, "It was important to me that everyone that had never seen themselves represented felt like they were on stage with us." To be a successful star today is to be comfortable with your own ubiquity, but to be an icon is to turn that ubiquity into something that breaks barriers. It's to pull off the impossible. It's to do what Beyoncé did at Glastonbury, on *Lemonade*, on *Beyoncé*, at Coachella. It's to consistently raise the bar until it's no longer surprising when you do. —*Alex Suskind*

→ **TAYLOR SWIFT** If Bey dominated the album drop, Tay's *1989* showed us how to perfectly roll one out in the age of social media. **ADELE** The power-ballad queen's double punch of 2011's *21* and 2015's *25* brought the zeitgeist to emotional nirvana.





THE CASES THAT CAPTIVATED

Nº 4 SERIAL

Given today's vast array of podcasts, it's hard to believe the show that started it all is only five years old. *Serial* season 1's exploration of the 1999 murder of Baltimore student Hae Min Lee (and the conviction of her ex-boyfriend Adnan Syed) inspired a fervor of online sleuthing and propelled podcasting into the mainstream. "Our goal had been 300,000 downloads. We got there, I think, in five days, and within a week or two we were at a million," recalls host and producer Sarah Koenig, whose soothing voice even got parodied on *SNL*. "We started breaking records, and then I was more confused. I couldn't conceive of how big that was." *Serial* ignited a booming industry in true crime; it's a label Koenig doesn't disavow, but she says, "We just tried to do what a lot of reporters try to do: elucidate how our system works through the course of one case." Except when they did, everyone listened. —*Jessica Derschowitz*

→ **MAKING A MURDERER** Netflix transfixed us in 2015 with this frustrating case study of wrongful convictions. **THE JINX** HBO's gripping docuseries about Robert Durst forever changed the world of hot microphones.

SYED: *SERIAL*; BEYONCE: CHRISTOPHER POLK/GETTY IMAGES



Nº 5

THE LADIES WHO MADE US LAUGH

Bridesmaids

YES, IT HAD BOTH ROM AND COM (and, among the other bodily fluids splattered across one unforgettable scene, vom). But 2011's *Bridesmaids* was a movie that refused in almost every other way to adhere to the conventions of Hollywood—not only in its left-field casting and wildly scatological script, but in the very idea of what a female-driven comedy could be.

SNL alums Kristen Wiig (who co-wrote the screenplay) and Maya Rudolph brought their real-life rapport to the screen as, respectively, a flailing Milwaukee cake-maker and her newly engaged best friend. Jon Hamm was the jackhole that dating nightmares are made of, and Chris O'Dowd the improbable Irish dreamboat. A crew of then-little-known actors—including Rose Byrne as a passive-aggressive Stepford princess, Wendi McLendon-Covey as a put-upon mom, and walking id ball Melissa McCarthy, who stormed every scene like a human hurricane in pearls and a polyblend golf shirt—rounded out the wedding party. They ate bad Brazilian beef, boarded an ill-fated flight to Vegas, and took home way too many party-favor puppies from the bridal shower; there were screaming fights in a chocolate fountain and a tennis match from hell. But *Bridesmaids* was never about any one scene. Instead, it delivered what only the best comedies can: the gift of pure, uncalculated chemistry. "It felt like you were at camp," Ellie Kemper, who played Becca, a Pixar-loving naïf aching to tap into her inner sex panther, told EW. "You were making a movie with your friends." Watching it felt, by proxy, like being friends with them too. *—Leah Greenblatt*

→ **GIRLS TRIP** 2017's feel-good R-rated hit made a star of Tiffany Haddish and felt like a bachelorette party in and of itself. **BROAD CITY** Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson picked up where *Girls* left off in defining thoroughly modern millennials.

HOW VIDEOGAMES LEVELED UP

Nº 6

MINECRAFT

In the world of gaming, *Minecraft* was revolutionary. The craft-and-combat adventure's first beta test in 2009 was initially just a digital sandbox in which users could create; it was more of a "fun hobby project" back then, says Lydia Winters, the chief brand officer at Mojang, the studio behind *Minecraft*. "[It was] put out so that people could discuss what they thought about it." But now the indie title, purchased by Microsoft for over $2 billion in 2014, has built itself into the best-selling videogame of all time.

Block by Block, a foundation that uses *Minecraft* in real-world architectural planning (you can't say that about *Pokémon GO*!), launched in 2012. An Education Edition of the game was released in 2016 once Mojang realized teachers were using it in classrooms. Today more than 112 million gamers play each month, and the studio, whose success raised the bar for indie developer potential, is still looking ahead. Despite a false alarm in October, there are no plans for *Minecraft 2*—but the real question, says Winters, is "What new genres can we take *Minecraft* in?" We hear superheroes are pretty big right now. *—Nick Romano*

→ **FORTNITE** This kiddie-friendly battle royale allowed for a total takeover by teens and their inexplicably viral dance moves. **POKÉMON GO** For one brief, shining summer in 2015, everyone learned what "going outside" was.



BRIDESMAIDS: UNIVERSAL PICTURES; *MINECRAFT*: MICROSOFT CORPORATION/MOJANG STUDIOS



JOAN MARCUS

№ 7

THE MUSICALS OF THE MILLENNIUM

HAMILTON

NO 18TH-CENTURY U.S. STATESMAN had more sway on music, Broadway, or the general zeitgeist than Treasury treasure Alexander Hamilton, the immigrant hero about whom Lin-Manuel Miranda spun a genre-defying, generation-defining, record-smashing 2015 musical that, among other impacts, demanded a renewed spotlight be shone on theater as a cornerstone of American culture.

"The thing that always tripped people up was the incongruity of a hip-hop musical from this historical tone, which I always find surprising," says Miranda, who earned two Tonys, a Grammy, the MacArthur grant, Kennedy Center Honors, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his work on *Hamilton*. "All I was looking to was tradition. Because I live in musical-theater land, I know a disproportionate amount about Argentine politics because of *Evita*. I know about a failed revolution in France because of f---in' *Les Miz*. To me it was not [out of place] to have a musical address historical subjects, and the musical forms I was applying to it were just musical forms I had been working hard to master. When I started reading Ron Chernow's [2004 biography of Hamilton], I thought, 'Well, this will be my *Jesus Christ Superstar*.' So I've been consistently surprised by how groundbreaking it has been perceived as because I just feel like I'm one in a long tradition of people who have used musical theater on unconventional subjects."

Yet tough as it might be to crack his humility, Miranda is acutely cognizant of the emotional impact, especially when anecdotes (or EW) force him to acknowledge how *Hamilton* did, in fact, change the game for every player. He recalls one particularly gratifying moment: "I had seen Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time* and they actually quoted the show—I will never forget that as long as I live—but I had the chance to meet Ava after and she told me that when she met with Disney about the movie, she said, 'I hope you know I'm doing a *Hamilton* on this.' And the fact that she used that as shorthand for 'I'm casting this with actors of color and it's all hands on deck'—that was very, very moving to me. The fact that this show is cast the way it is and has been as successful as it has I think broke down *some* kind of door. I think we've ended the conversation about nontraditional casting in a very real way. There's no going backwards now." Only going back, perhaps, for another performance—if you can get a ticket. *—Marc Snetiker*

→ **THE BOOK OF MORMON** The creators of *South Park* evangelized Broadway with one of the funniest musicals of all time. **FUN HOME** Jeanine Tesori's take on Alison Bechdel's gay awakening was as gentle as it was groundbreaking.

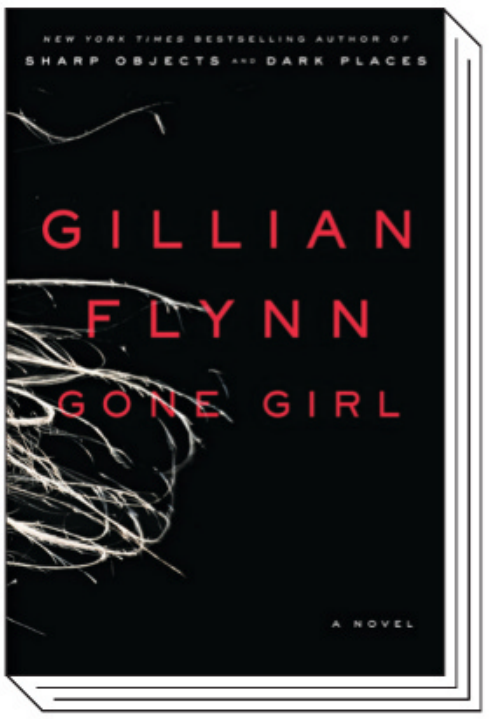


№ 8

THE BOOKS THAT BROKE BARRIERS

Gone Girl

WHEN GILLIAN FLYNN'S 2012 NOVEL was published, people wanted to talk about it. This stunned the author. "To go from your weird hollow where you write, to *The View*, talking to Whoopi Goldberg, within the space of a couple weeks is definitely head-turning," says Flynn, a former EW writer. *Gone Girl* was her third novel and not only marked her breakthrough but became one of the best-selling books of the decade. Flynn loaded the novel, about a marriage in which the wife disappears (because, we eventually learn—spoiler!—she faked her own death), with devices that seemed avant-garde at the time, but are now staples for the prestige thriller: unreliable narrators, structural twists, and a treatment of women's lives as being equally as exciting, unpredictable, and nuanced as men's. "I'm proud [that it] reminded people the domestic sphere doesn't have to be [limited to] frothy, light topics," Flynn says. "Things in the domestic sphere being about women and less worth our attention—that idea is absolutely not true. So I love that there's now the term 'domestic thriller.'"



Besides subverting gender norms, *Gone Girl* affirmed books' vibrant cultural pulse, too, both as a source for Hollywood (David Fincher directed the 2014 adaptation) and as a conversation starter. "People at book signings would wait in line, slam the book down, and just say, 'I hated this book!'" Flynn recalls. "It was great! I'd accomplished what I wanted: People argued about not just plot or character, but what it *meant*." *—David Canfield*

→ **BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME** Ta-Nehisi Coates delivered a seminal modern entry into the chronicle of the black experience in America. **A LITTLE LIFE** Hanya Yanagihara's queer opus challenged, devastated, and inspired a community.

THE MEMES THAT DROVE US MAD

№ 9 THE DRESS

The 2010s provided memes for every pocket of the internet, but if we all found cross-platform unity, it was through one low-res image of a dress. "I don't think we've seen that singularity of virality in the same way either before or since," says Cates Holderness, a former BuzzFeed editor who, in 2015, was sent a Tumblr photo (posted by Scottish musician Caitlin McNeill) of what was clearly a blue-and-black dress to her—but when colleagues swore it was white and gold, she published a poll and broke the internet. Over 20 million shares later, Holderness believes memes are embedded in pop culture because they "make content you might not be familiar with more approachable." She ascribes the dress phenomenon to its positivity: "It didn't matter how old you are... you could look at this picture and have an opinion on it." Just remember: Everyone is entitled to be loud and wrong. *—Marcus Jones*

→ **LA LA LAPSE** The Oscars' *Moonlight* mix-up provided the most thrilling awards moment in years. **THE ROYAL WEDDING(S)** For William+Kate and Harry+Meghan, the world woke up early to watch, cry, and meme accordingly.



GONE GIRL: DAVID FINCHER/20TH CENTURY FOX



ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK: JESSICA MIGLIO/NETFLIX; HOUSE OF CARDS: PATRICK HARBRON/NETFLIX; THE CROWN, BOJACK HORSEMAN, STRANGER THINGS: NETFLIX (3); UNBREAKABLE KIMMY SCHMIDT: MATTHIAS CLAMER/NETFLIX; BLACK MIRROR: JONATHAN PRIME/NETFLIX; NARCOS: DANIEL DAZA/NETFLIX

№ 10

HOW STREAMING SMASHED THE RULES

NETFLIX

WHEN IT COMES TO TV, THE DAYS of weekly watch parties and bathroom breaks during commercials are over. With more and more viewers cutting the cord, streaming is at the center of television today—and at the center of that center is Netflix.

After stepping into original programming in 2012 with the gangster dramedy *Lilyhammer*, the subscription service produced some of the decade's biggest, buzziest shows, from 2013's *House of Cards* to cultural phenoms *Orange Is the New Black*, *Stranger Things*, and more. For creators, Netflix offered a chance to work free of time constraints and broadcast standards, which is why powerhouse showrunners like Ryan Murphy and Shonda Rhimes have signed overall deals with the streaming giant. "[Working with Netflix] lifts a layer of creative restrictions," says *The Vampire Diaries* co-creator Julie Plec, who sold her first Netflix series, *The Girls on the Bus*, this summer. "Broadcast has so much to offer, but that freedom is what I longed for."

Yet Netflix's impact goes beyond just the content it creates. For network shows, landing on Netflix can be the difference between surviving and, well, thriving; AMC's *Breaking Bad* saw its ratings grow by 300 percent between its season 4 and 5 finales after previous seasons hit Netflix. And it's hard to argue with the numbers: As of October 2019, the service reported it had more than 158 million paid subscriptions worldwide. So yeah, it's safe to say: We *are* still watching. —*Samantha Highfill*

→ **AMAZON** Crossover hits like *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Transparent* bolstered the brand's comedy cred. **HULU** The perennial underdog became the first streamer to win an Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series with *The Handmaid's Tale*.

MY MUST LIST

CATHERINE O'HARA

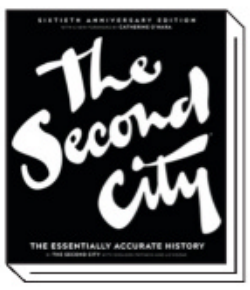
→ From her early days on *SCTV* to her memorable roles in Tim Burton and Christopher Guest films to her uproarious turn on Pop TV's ***Schitt's Creek*** (returning Jan. 7), one of Canada's funniest exports has never wanted for work. This December she returns to the role of Sally for *The Nightmare Before Christmas in Concert*, touring the U.K. Here O'Hara shares a few of her favorite things.



MOVIES

The Irishman and *Little Women*

Martin Scorsese's bleakly funny, surgically violent movie about the dark souls who lead their families into the unhappiest of brotherhoods, and Greta Gerwig's version of the Louisa May Alcott classic—a wonderful dream you won't forget, about sisterhood in every good sense of the word—are both gifts to film lovers.



BOOK

The Second City: The Essentially Accurate History

I'm loving my fresh copy of the updated edition, which celebrates our 60th anniversary. (I wrote its foreword.) Even if you don't care to read how your favorite comedy actors got their starts, you'll love the unflatteringly hilarious pictures!

STAGE

Beetlejuice the musical

I met my husband, Bo Welch, when he designed the sets for *Beetlejuice* [the movie]. This year we were treated to Broadway's musical adaptation. It's not only a joyously anarchic tribute, but a loving upgrade of the movie that brought Bo and me together.







TV

Last Week Tonight With John Oliver

While I await next season's *Succession*, a drama so beautifully executed it somehow makes me empathize with its despicable characters, John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* keeps me equally delighted and depressed. If only the subjects of *his* stories about treachery and corruption were fictional.



MUSIC

Miss America

My sister, Mary Margaret O'Hara, created an album in 1988 that is still revered by music critics. Listen to her beautiful, haunting, scratchy, danceable songs and tell me she isn't still influencing great musicians.

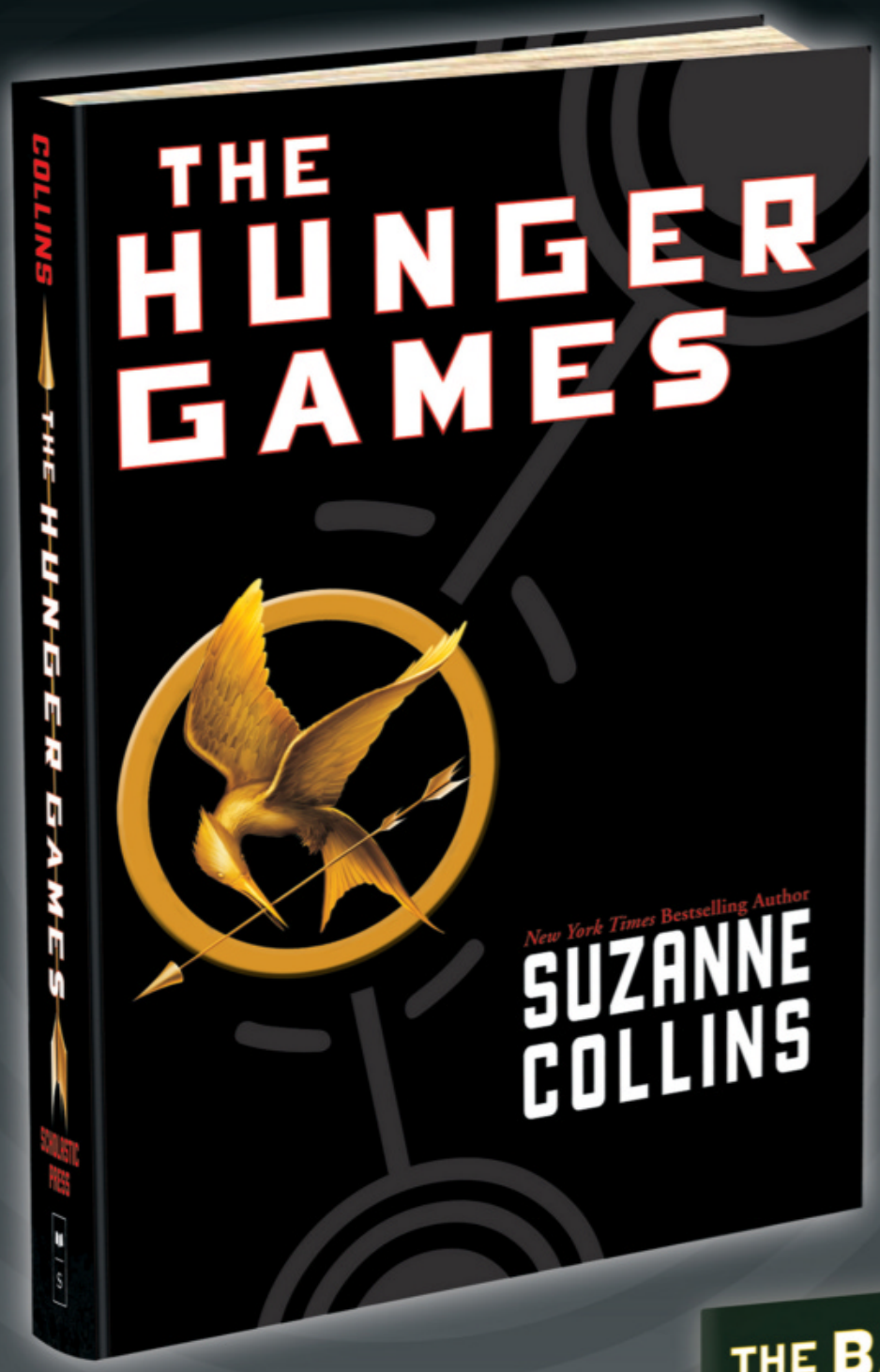
LOVE *SCHITT'S CREEK*?
Listen to *EW's Binge* wherever you get your podcasts to hear co-creator/star Dan Levy dive deep into each season of the comedy. And stay tuned for *EW On Set* for cast interviews after every episode of season 6.

LITTLE WOMEN: WILSON WEBB/SONY; *BEETLEJUICE*: MATTHEW MURPHY; *LAST WEEK TONIGHT*: LLOYD BISHOP/HBO; O'HARA: JUCO/THE LICENSING PROJECT

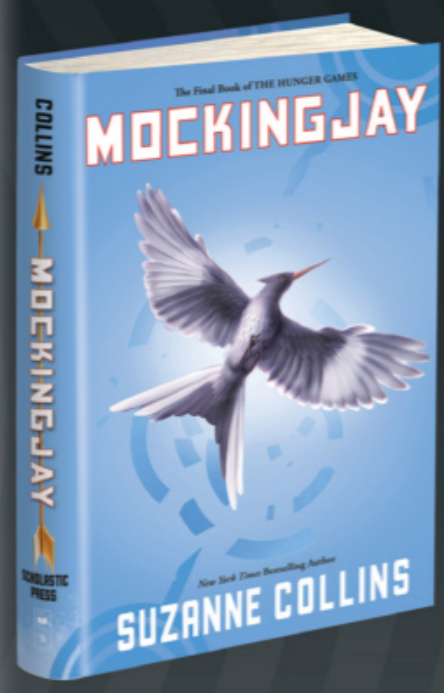
"I COULDN'T STOP READING."

—STEPHEN KING, *Entertainment Weekly*





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First Take

AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW OF YOUR NEXT OBSESSIONS

EDITED BY → PATRICK GOMEZ @PATRICKGOMEZLA



AIMEE SPINKS/STARZ

SAM HEUGHAN & CAITRIONA BALFE

OUTLANDER

A SNEAK PEEK AT SEASON 5 OF STARZ'S HIT DRAMA, WHICH PREMIERES FEB. 16 AND IS BASED ON *THE FIERY CROSS*, THE FIFTH BOOK IN DIANA GABALDON'S BEST-SELLING SERIES. ***By* Lynette Rice**





BALFE: JASON BELL/STARZ; CAT: MARK MAINZ/STARZ

PARTY ON THE RIDGE! WHEN *Outlander* returns for season 5, fans will see Claire (Caitriona Balfe) and Jamie (Sam Heughan) gather all the people who've made Fraser's Ridge their home for a grand wedding. Everyone who's anyone attends the outdoor celebration, including Lord John Grey (David Berry) and Royal Gov. William Tryon (Tim Downie), the latter ready to collect on Jamie's promise to hunt the Scottish regulators who oppose British taxation. But Jamie is in no hurry to capture his godfather, Murtagh (Duncan Lacroix), the leader of the local resistance who's developed a secret romance with Jamie's aunt Jocasta (Maria Doyle Kennedy). "Jamie's actually in a really difficult situation this season," Heughan says. "He's done a deal with the British, but he's working for two different camps. He's trying to protect his people, and he's trying to protect Fraser's Ridge. To be honest, we all know Jamie's heart. His line of thinking is more in the direction of the regulators than the Brits."

And that's just scratching the surface of the drama unfolding at the wedding: Roger (Richard Rankin) laments his inability to provide for Brianna (Sophie Skelton) because he can't farm, ride a horse, or even "wield a sword," while Bree learns that her rapist, Stephen Bonnet (Ed Speleers), is still running around North Carolina. "There's kind of a two-prong thing of Bree. She's just in a lot of pain emotionally and physically," explains Skelton. "That's one thing that I really wanted to keep going with this season. I wanted to make sure the post-traumatic stress syndrome—from the rape—is a tether for Bree. Being intimate and physically close to Roger is going to be a



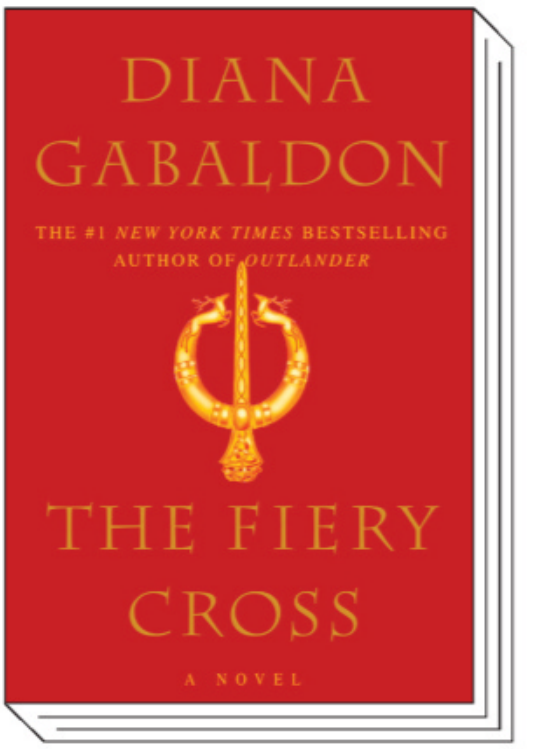
↖ **Left** Claire (Caitriona Balfe) treats residents of Fraser's Ridge in her surgery, where she concocts her own remedies and even operates on patients

lot more difficult than it was [before the assault]."

At least they won't have to share that small cabin with her parents. Jamie's built his wife a grand, two-story house that not only serves as the Fraser's Ridge headquarters but features a surgery where Claire can concoct her own medicine and even perform a tonsillectomy. "Fans of the book will know this sort of stuff is coming up," teases Balfe. "Claire makes her own medicine. It's been really interesting having her find ways of being able to perform certain surgeries that would have been so commonplace in the 1960s."

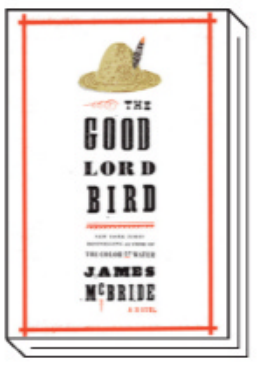
Look out for other additions to the Fraser household: Jamie rustles up a new pet for Claire, a cat they dub Adso, which comes with its own set of off-camera challenges. "I mean, if Rollo was uncooperative, I can only imagine what a cat's going to do on camera," says Balfe, in reference to the pet dog that was introduced last season. And what's that on Heughan's head in the photo on page 21? Did the hair and makeup department finally outfit the Highlander with a more attractive wig? "He finally stopped cutting his bangs," Heughan says slyly about his new 'do while acknowledging viewer feedback about his previous coif. "There are always some fans who appreciate something while others don't. You can't please everyone all the time. But I'm pleased with the look this season. He's older. He's mature." But no less handsome.

← **Left** Check out the im-purr-tant new cast member! Jamie finds Claire a cat this season, and they name it Adso after his mother's feline.



ADAPTATION NATION

THE FIERY CROSS ISN'T THE ONLY NOVEL COMING TO A TV NEAR YOU



The Good Lord Bird

SHOWTIME *(FEB. 16, 2020)*

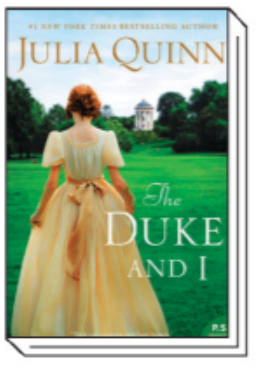
Inspired by true events, this eight-part adaptation of James McBride's novel centers on abolitionist John Brown (executive producer and co-writer Ethan Hawke), Frederick Douglass (*Hamilton*'s Daveed Diggs), and a lawman on the other side of history (Wyatt Russell).



Little Fires Everywhere

HULU *(SPRING 2020)*

Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington star in this take on Celeste Ng's 2017 hit, revolving around a picture-perfect family (led by Witherspoon) and the mother-daughter duo (Washington and Lexi Underwood) who seemingly upend their lives.



Bridgerton

NETFLIX *(LATE 2020)*

Starting with 2000's *The Duke and I*, Julia Quinn's Bridgerton novels tell the love stories of a 19th-century English family. Now Shonda Rhimes is bringing us a series that stars *Younger*'s Phoebe Dynevor as the eldest Bridgerton daughter, Daphne, and is narrated by Julie Andrews.



AL PACINO & LOGAN LERMAN

HUNTERS

***HUNTERS* SERIES CREATOR DAVID** Weil recalls being just 6 years old when he and his brothers gathered around their grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, to hear some of their first stories about Nazis and World War II. "It was such a strange and jarring thing to hear as a kid," Weil says. So he processed them the only way he knew how: "I saw those stories as comic-book stories, stories of grand good versus grand evil, and that became the lens through which I saw the Holocaust." Now Weil is approaching his new Amazon Prime Video series (launching in 2020) the same way.

In this sometimes ultraviolent tale about a group of vigilantes fighting Nazis in 1977 New York City, Weil seeks to turn the stories of real-life Jewish heroes into superheroes—in a street-level crime-fighting sense more than a cape-wearing sense, though their headquarters is referred to as "the Batcave." "It becomes this story that lives not in black and white but in the gray and that murky morality," explains Weil. "If we hunt these monsters, do we risk becoming them ourselves?"

The series (previously called *The Hunt*) is a combination of three worlds. It begins with Jonah (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*'s Logan Lerman), a Jewish comic-book-shop clerk recruited by Meyer Offerman (Al Pacino) to

CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS/AMAZON STUDIOS (4)







join the Hunters, whose mission is to uncover Nazis hiding in America 30 years after the war and prevent the formation of a Fourth Reich.

Lerman was just 13 when he last starred on a television series (The WB's *Jack & Bobby*), but the actor says the creative team and the character arc made it easy to make such a hefty commitment again. "He's a young man, struggling financially with his grandmother," Lerman, 27, says of his character. "He has to make sacrifices for the path he wants to take in life so he can stay and support his family."

The series also focuses on Millie (*Grey's Anatomy* vet Jerrika Hinton), who provides a look inside the world of the FBI, which is also working to weed out Nazism. "She is one of the first black women to work for the bureau, so she's a pioneer in that way," Hinton notes. "She's a devout Catholic, she's a woman of faith, and those two things tell you a lot about how she sees the world. Her guiding light is a very clear sense of right and wrong."

↖ Al Pacino's Meyer takes Logan Lerman's Jonah under his wing

↑ Meet the Hunters, played by Tiffany Boone, Saul Rubinek, Carol Kane, Kate Mulvany, Josh Radnor, and Louis Ozawa Changchien

↗ **Top** Jerrika Hinton **Bottom** Greg Austin

Then there is "the grand evil," the Nazis themselves, a group powered by their sociopathic golden boy, Travis (Greg Austin, who appeared on the *Doctor Who* spin-off *Class*). According to Austin, Travis doesn't necessarily believe in the group's dogma. "He's a normal American kid that has somehow been caught up with this reemergence of Nazis, because it allows him to express his violence and his lust for chaos," he says.

Pitching a show like *Hunters*, which also includes flashbacks to concentration camps and brutal slayings of Nazis, was "a high-wire act," says Weil. "People were afraid of it." Turn on any news program these days, and you can probably guess why. It's also partly why it was crucial that he and his team—including executive producer Jordan Peele—provide levity in the series to counterbalance the seriousness of the material. "The comedy is so prevalent, and you can really push the envelope with a lot of these characters because all of these Hunters come from different backgrounds," says executive producer Nikki Toscano, who serves as co-showrunner alongside Weil. "All of them have been discriminated against in some way, and I loved this idea of them collectively trying to take the power back."

Just call them the original Defenders of Hell's Kitchen. —NICK ROMANO

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PENN BADGLEY & VICTORIA PEDRETTI

YOU

JOE GOLDBERG HAS AN OBSESSION. Or at least he did.

Based on Caroline Kepnes' best-selling 2014 novel of the same name, *YOU* introduced us to Joe (Penn Badgley), the charming literature obsessive who fell for a woman named Beck (Elizabeth Lail) the second she walked into his bookstore. Only in Joe's world, falling for someone meant stealing her phone, hacking into her daily life, and masturbating outside her apartment window. You could call him a stalker, or you could say he was just madly in love. (He was definitely a stalker.)

But despite offering a fast-paced, morally complex story, *YOU*'s first season, which wrapped in November on Lifetime, didn't make much of a splash...until it hit Netflix in late December. With the streaming giant reporting that 40 million subscribers viewed the show in its first month, it was no surprise when the series moved to Netflix for season 2. And while it will now be on a platform that eliminates network time constraints and content restrictions, viewers can expect more of what they loved the first time around. "Netflix was clear they wanted us to give them a show that was like season 1," says showrunner Sera Gamble. "They basically said, 'It's not broke, don't fix it.'"

That's not to say the story will feel the same. Much like in Kepnes' 2016 follow-up *Hidden Bodies*, Joe is moving from New York to Los Angeles in season 2 (out Dec. 26). There he'll meet Love (Victoria Pedretti). "It's not that simple love-at-first-sight he might've been looking for a couple of years ago," Gamble says. "He's a different guy. He's been through more." And Love sees that Joe has suffered a great loss—without knowing the gory details—and considers him a "kindred spirit," as Gamble puts it. "The circumstances of his encounter with Love are very informed by what he went through with Beck."

They're also informed by the other woman in his life. Season 1 ended with the series' biggest deviation from the books: Candace (Ambyr Childers), Joe's ex, is alive and well! And she'll throw him for a loop in season 2. "She is a survivor," Gamble says. "And now she's faced with some really difficult decisions about how she's going to move forward." —SAMANTHA HIGHFILL

↑ Stare master: Joe (Penn Badgley) follows his new paramour, Love (Victoria Pedretti)

↓ Joe and Candace (Ambyr Childers)



TYLER GOLDEN/NETFLIX (2)

THE WAR



Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac, far right) takes control of the *Millennium Falcon* for the first time with co-pilot Chewbacca (Joonas Suotamo) and Resistance fighter Finn (John Boyega)

ALL

TO END



BEHIND THE SCENES OF *THE RISE OF SKYWALKER*— THE EPIC AND MYSTERIOUS *STAR WARS* FINALE 42 YEARS IN THE MAKING

BY JAMES HIBBERD
@JAMESHIBBERD

WARS



1

J.J. ABRAMS IS RACING. THE DIRECTOR HAS BEEN TASKED WITH BRINGING FOUR DECADES OF ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR LONG-RUNNING SCI-FI FRANCHISES OF ALL TIME TO AN EPIC CONCLUSION. NOWADAYS, HE'S FEELING A BIT LIKE LUKE SKYWALKER

flying his X-wing fighter down the Death Star trench in *A New Hope* as TIE fighters close in—in other words, under a bit of pressure—with the fate of the entire *Star Wars* universe depending on him.

"We always knew we were going to have three fewer months to postproduction this film," says Abrams, who took over co-writing and directing duties two years ago after successfully rebooting the franchise with 2015's blockbuster *The Force Awakens*. "So much is still being worked on. It's literally a practical race to get it finished."

If that admission sounds worrisome, hold your fire on those tweets. Despite a deadline crunch to make the film's Dec. 20 worldwide launch (EW's interview was conducted in late October), Abrams says he's feeling "infinitely better" at this very late stage about *The Rise of Skywalker* than he was about *The Force Awakens*.

"We had more reshoots on *Episode VII* than this one," Abrams says. "We had more story adjustments on *VII* than this one. We didn't

(PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS SPREAD) JONATHAN OLLEY /LUCASFILM LTD. (4)





2



3

↑ **[1]** Rey (Daisy Ridley) uses the Force against a remote; **[2]** warrior Jannah (Naomi Ackie) and Finn; **[3]** meet the Resistance: Finn, Poe Dameron, and Rose Tico (Kelly Marie Tran)

know if these characters would work, if the actors would be able to carry a *Star Wars* movie. There were a lot of things we didn't know. On this, we knew who and what worked, and everyone is doing the best work I've ever seen anyone do. But the ambition of this movie is far greater than *Force Awakens*. What we set out to do was far more challenging. Everything is exponentially larger on this."

For example: Disney has released three trailers for *The Rise of Skywalker*. Some of the shots are stunning and seemingly revealing: desert scavenger–turned–Jedi apprentice Rey (Daisy Ridley) and First Order leader Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) clashing with lightsabers on the half-submerged wreckage of the second Death Star that was blown up in *Return of the Jedi*; Rey facing off against a somehow resurrected Emperor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid); the *Millennium Falcon* flying into a massive armada of Star Destroyers. Plus, those bewildering teases of Rey turning to the dark side and teaming up with Kylo.

Yet Abrams says fans still don't really know anything. "The [trailers] that have come out are scratching the surface of what the movie is," the famously spoiler-averse director says.

Asked if there are major action sequences we've yet to see any footage from, Abrams replies with a firm "Yes" and then, naturally, goes silent.

John Boyega, who plays stormtrooper–turned–Resistance fighter Finn, says his first reaction to the script written by Abrams and Chris Terrio was to "read the script six more times because there was so much information in there."

Here's what we know about how *Episode IX* begins: It's been more than a year since the events of 2017's *The Last Jedi*. The First Order has decimated the Resistance. Rey has been training to use the Force. Finn and hotshot pilot Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) have been sent by General Leia Organa (the late Carrie Fisher) to find allies throughout the galaxy, but so far haven't had any luck. "They're trying to put Band-Aids on this leaking ship of the Resistance," Isaac says.

Their mission leads Finn, Poe, and Rey to work together, which has, oddly, never happened before in the trilogy. And since there's a time jump, the characters have all grown and changed since we last saw them. "We're not just a ragtag group of people who have been thrown together," Isaac says. "We've actually had time to train. There's some really great sequences with the three of us infiltrating spaces."

Both Isaac and Boyega say they had their character wishes granted for the final film. Isaac wanted Poe to get "out the cockpit and into the group," while Boyega wanted Finn to become a more capable soldier (and not, as the actor candidly puts it, just a "comedic goofy dude who never gets stuff done").

"I definitely wanted more after *Episode VIII*," Boyega says. "[*Rise of Skywalker*] makes Finn's *Episode VIII* arc make more sense. We got to bring out a side we haven't seen."

To help spark the trio's onscreen chemistry, Abrams told his cast to feel free to improvise dialogue, and many scenes were shot using one long, continuous take to keep their flow going. "J.J. came back with a new energy and new vibe," Boyega says. "He wanted dialogue to be messy and natural, and that got all of us really excited."

"I think it really captures the spirit of the original trilogy," Isaac adds. "On top of that, there's the fact that Rey has..."

The actor stops, catching himself before revealing too much.

Rey has...what?

"Rey is driving her own thing," Ridley says. "She's not doing what other people are telling her to do."

We last saw Rey mourning the death of her mentor Luke Skywalker (who returns in the final film, presumably in Force-ghost form) and shutting the door on Kylo's power-mad seduction attempt. The heroine has since made progress in her Jedi training. "I have skills that have developed, but *confident* isn't a word I'd use to describe it," Ridley says. "She's definitely more in control of everything and can do new, fun stuff, but she's vulnerable and a little insecure about it all."

Yet Rey will use more than her Force powers in the new film. As Abrams hints: "The scavenger who is desperate and haggling for portions and trying to survive [in *Force Awakens*]—those specific skills and that specific experience end up being essential to saving the galaxy."

Ridley trained in kickboxing for the final chapter as well, but says the emotional toll of Rey's journey was more difficult than any combat scenes. "It's a heavy story for Rey," Ridley says. "There were days where I was literally like, 'I can't do this, I'm so tired, I don't know if I can, like, reach that emotion again.'"

Part of Rey's journey involves solving the mystery of her identity. Well, again. Kylo revealed in *The Last Jedi* that Rey's parents are deceased nobodies, "filthy junk-traders [who] sold you off for drinking money." The line embraced the idea that a hero doesn't need to descend from somebody special in order to be



1



2

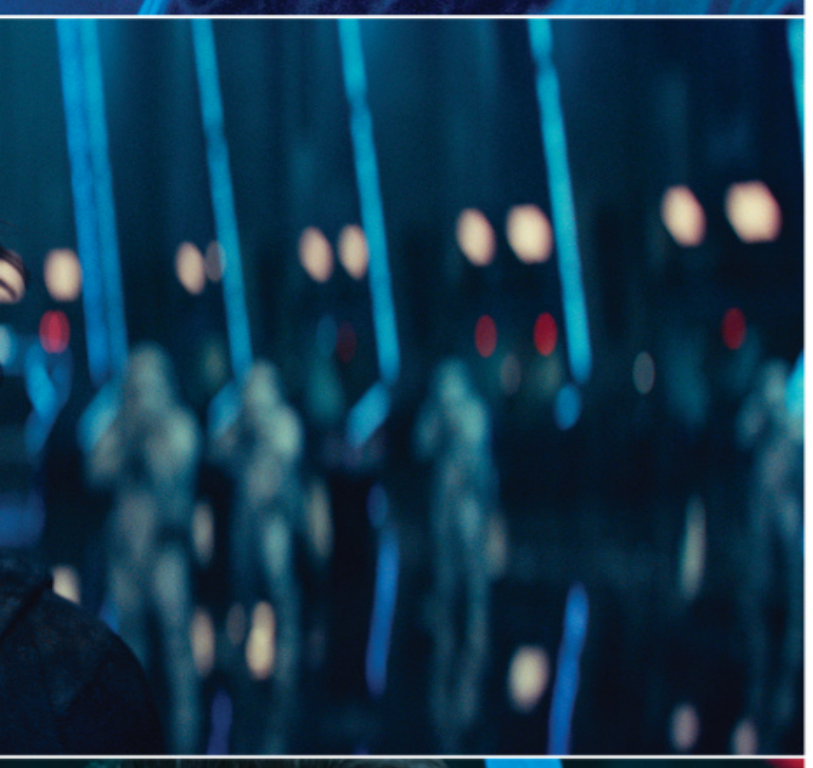


3

↑ **[1]** Finn, Chewie, Rey, and Poe, ready for action
→ **[2]** Kylo (Adam Driver) unmasked
↘ **[3]** Saga newcomer First Order General Pryde (Richard E. Grant)

"THIS HAS BEEN A VERY LONG CHESS MATCH THAT'S BEEN PLAYED BETWEEN THE JEDI AND THE SITH—ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE VERY BEGINNING," ISAAC TEASES.







STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER: LUCASFILM LTD. (2); GRANT: JOHN WILSON/LUCASFILM LTD.

somebody special. Yet many fans called foul as the trilogy has teased Rey's identity as being crucial information from the start ("Classified?" Rey echoed back to BB-8 during her debut sequence. "Me too. Big secret").

"The parents thing is not satisfied—for her and for the audience," Ridley says. "That's something she's still trying to figure out—where does she come from?"

It's unclear whether Abrams has made a course correction to *Last Jedi* writer-director Rian Johnson's plan or there was always more to say about Rey's parentage. Either way, wasn't the *Episode VIII* scene supposed to be sincere?

"It's not that she doesn't believe it," Ridley says carefully, "but she feels there's more to the story. And she needs to figure out what's come before so she can figure out what to do next..."

An even bigger cliffhanger is the resolution of Rey's complex relationship with the First Order's humorless psychopathic leader, who—okay, fine—also looks hot shirtless in high-waisted pants (but what if he didn't?). Kylo has grown beyond being a "petulant teenager," and Driver says Kylo's killing of Supreme Leader Snoke was "kind of a birth moment for him."

"He had all of these pseudo–father figures that he had to either live up to or literally kill to become his own person for the first time," the actor says.

Naturally Kylo's destiny will lead to at least one lightsaber clash with Rey. Abrams sees the duo as "two sides of the same coin," noting, "Even when they're not together, they still haunt each other in a way—they know they are each other's unresolved business."

For his part, Driver rejects any labels for the Rey-Kylo relationship. "I don't think it's all one thing," he says. "Part of the fun of playing it is the boundaries of it keep changing. At times it's more intimate, sometimes less intimate. Sometimes it's codependent. And then it's, obviously, adversarial."

That Rey and Kylo end up battling on the wreckage of the second Death Star continues Abrams' penchant for showcasing ruined relics of the original trilogy—like Rey spelunking in a wrecked Star Destroyer and living in an AT-AT walker on Jakku in *Force Awakens*. "It felt like going into the haunted house, the place that you have to go to," Abrams says of bringing back the iconic space station. "This is a story of people having to grapple with the burden the prior generation dumps on those that follow. So literally returning to this wreck of the past and having to fight it out felt like an obvious metaphor, but also felt incredibly cinematic."

Of course, there's another original-trilogy fallen icon in the film, too: Fisher died after filming *The Last Jedi*. Figuring out how to utilize her previously deleted scenes in the new movie was one of Abrams' biggest challenges. "Saying Leia had passed away, or that she was off somewhere else, felt like a cheat," Abrams says. "Then I remembered we had these scenes that we hadn't used from *Episode VII*. It was like finding this impossible answer to this

DO. OR DO NOT. THERE IS NO TRY.

What do these bits of *Star Wars* trivia have in common?

(Answers on page 43)

COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

SY SNOOTLES

FIGRIN D'AN

SUDSWATER DILLIFAY GLON



↑ A squad of stormtroopers—and, behind them, snowtroopers—on the march

impossible question. Suddenly we had classic Carrie in these amazing moments. So when you see her in the movie, it's her, she's there. It's not like there's some crazy digital trickery. She's just in the movie."

A couple of other original-trilogy characters are likewise integral. Billy Dee Williams is back as that ol' pirate Lando Calrissian for the first time in live action since *Return of the Jedi*. Williams says he's excited to return to the character despite having to endure fans coming up to him for decades accusing him of betraying Han Solo. "The whole *Star Wars* experience feels like it never goes away; it's always there," Williams says. "There are all of these things that have happened in Lando's life that he's got to resolve."

There's also paranoid android C-3PO, who in the latest *Skywalker* trailer ominously says he's taking a "last look" at his friends. Threepio is essential to a movie's plot for the first time since *A New Hope* (Ridley points out that Rey might spend more time with Threepio than any other character in the film).

"In previous recent movies the droid has just been kind of window dressing, something on the mantelpiece—you polish it and dust it off when guests are coming," says Anthony Daniels, who has played the golden droid in every Skywalker Saga movie. "J.J. and Chris came up with this aspect of Threepio we had not seen before that's remarkably clever. They go down deep into ancient *Star Wars* and come up with something refreshingly new."

Joining C-3PO in the metal-headgear club is newcomer to the saga Keri Russell. Despite having worked with Abrams for years on *Felicity*, the actress found herself escorted to a small room where she could only read the *Skywalker* script under watchful guard. Her character is Zorii Bliss, who's "involved in some intimate, sketchy stuff" and wears a large brass-and-crimson Daft Punk-like helmet.

"For a shy person, this is my ultimate dream job—I get to be in *Star Wars* and my face is covered," Russell marvels. "I can see everyone and no one can see me. Though I now have giant, throbbing neck muscles like Mr. T."

There's also newcomer Naomi Ackie portraying Jannah, a bow-and-arrow-wielding warrior who rides a horselike creature called an Orbak. Real animals were used on set, and until you've ridden a horse dressed up like an exotic alien across the surface of the Death Star, you haven't really lived. "I was just gobsmacked," Ackie says of the experience. "Every day you're grappling with the fact that every choice you make in a small moment is going to be broadcast to the entire world."

While the film is introducing new characters, Abrams insists *Rise of Skywalker* won't set up more story. He's not leaving loose threads for Disney to hang another trilogy on the back of this one. And yet, the final

JONATHAN OLLEY /LUCASFILM LTD.

THERE IS ANOTHER... *AND* ANOTHER... AND ANOTHER

THOUGH THE SKYWALKER SAGA IS ENDING WITH *EPISODE IX*, THERE ARE MORE STORIES TO TELL IN THE GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

"Less is more." That was Disney chief Bob Iger's declaration last month when asked about the future rollout of *Star Wars* movies. When it comes to *Star Wars* TV shows, however, the plan seems to be more is more. There's the first live-action series in the franchise, *The Mandalorian*—with Jon Favreau as showrunner and Pedro Pascal starring—which debuted Nov. 12 on the Disney+ streaming service. The second and final season of the *Star Wars Resistance* animated series is currently airing on the Disney Channel. Next up is the 12-episode seventh, and final, season of the beloved animated series *The Clone Wars* in February on Disney+. And there are two more live-action Disney+ drama series in the early stages: Ewan McGregor is reprising his role as the wise Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi in a story line set between George Lucas' prequels and *A New Hope*. Diego Luna is returning to the role of doomed Rebel spy Cassian Andor along with Alan Tudyk as the lumbering droid K-2SO on a *Rogue One* prequel series. Things aren't going entirely dormant on the theatrical side, either, with new movies in development by Rian Johnson and Marvel chief Kevin Feige (though the previously announced trilogy led by *Game of Thrones* showrunners David Benioff and Dan Weiss has been shelved). So the Force will continue to be with us—perhaps not always, but at least for the foreseeable future.





↑ Lando Calrissian (Billy Dee Williams), back on the *Millennium Falcon*

↙ Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) from *Rogue One*; Ahsoka Tano from *The Clone Wars*; Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) from *Revenge of the Sith*

Skywalker Saga film is very much about the future of the franchise. Since buying Lucasfilm in 2012, Disney's movies in a galaxy far, far away peaked early at the box office with *Force Awakens*, and sunk to their lowest level with the most recent entry, 2018's *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. Even if we never see Rey, Finn, and Poe on screen again, *Rise of Skywalker*'s popularity will likely make an impact on Disney's next moves with the franchise—guiding the studio like a fallen Jedi or Sith's unseen hand.

Speaking of: There's at least one key player we haven't discussed. Palpatine's return may be the most closely guarded story line in the film. How is the Emperor, whom Vader tossed into the Death Star's reactor core, back in a seemingly corporeal form?

"This has been a very long chess match that's been played between the Jedi and the Sith—all the way back to the very beginning," Isaac teases. "It's an amazing thing to see that really come to the forefront."

The Rise of Skywalker might very well turn out to be a full-fledged reunion special of Force ghosts. And what are the rules that govern the Jedi and Sith spirit realm anyway? Obi-Wan Kenobi said in *The Empire Strikes Back* that he "cannot interfere" with Luke's fight with Vader. But in *The Last Jedi*, Yoda suddenly called down a lightning strike. What can Force ghosts do—and not do—in this galaxy?

Abrams' reply to that key question is pretty much what you'd expect.

"That's probably best answered," the director says, "by not answering it."

COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

GASGANO

ALDAR BEEDO

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ADDITIONAL REPORTING > ANTHONY BREZNICAN

ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY, STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER: JONATHAN OLLEY/LUCASFILM LTD. (2); STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS: LUCASFILM LTD.; STAR WARS: EPISODE III - REVENGE OF THE SITH: RALPH NELSON JR./© & TM LUCASFILM, LTD.

SAGA GEN

Episode I

THE PHANTOM MENACE

SCENE → DARTH MAUL VS. OBI-WAN KENOBI AND QUI-GON JINN



Even *Star Wars* fans who have gripes about *The Phantom Menace* admit that its climactic lightsaber fight is one of the best—if not *the* best—laser-sword bouts in the franchise. The riveting three-way battle, with confident Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and his eager apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) facing the ferocious Sith apprentice Darth Maul (Ray Park), is a spectacular sequence, combining acrobatic moves and an array of Force powers. Stunt coordinator Nick Gillard initially designed the fight with a five-minute demo reel to show George Lucas. The director noted his films are for kids and played the footage for his then-5-year-old son, Jett, for a verdict. "Effectively, Jett Lucas decided the style of that fight," Gillard says. The sequence took two months to film because the team wanted to use the actors for as many shots as possible rather than stunt doubles. But perhaps the most dramatic moment is when the combat stops due to a series of forcefield chambers that briefly separate the fighters. Neeson improvised the idea that Qui-Gon would use the time to sit and meditate, Gillard says. Meanwhile, Gillard suggested to Park what Darth Maul would do: "'You look like a tiger in that makeup,'" he recalls telling Park. "'Why don't you do what tigers do at the zoo when they walk back and forth looking at you through the cage?'"

COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

ZIRO

EBOR

ROTTA

Episode II

ATTACK *OF THE* CLONES

SCENE → THE JEDI ARMY, REVEALED

If *The Phantom Menace* teased what two Jedi could accomplish together, this frenetic arena battle showcased the full strength of the Jedi Order. Mace Windu (Samuel L. Jackson) leads a small army of fighters to rescue Obi-Wan, Anakin (Hayden Christensen), and Padmé (Natalie Portman) from a gladiator arena, with dozens of Jedi facing down hordes of battle droids and insect-like Geonosians. Blue and green lightsabers swirl throughout the coliseum (with one purple exception for Mace), but the Jedi are outnumbered, and only a small group survives.

Filming took place over multiple days in Sydney, and the stunt team relied on detailed storyboards to capture both the overwhelming chaos of the battle and a few more intimate character moments—like Mace's fateful clash with the mercenary Jango Fett (Temuera Morrison). Lucas also wanted familiar Jedi fighters like Ki-Adi-Mundi and the grinning, green Kit Fisto to participate in the battle, so Gillard worked with each actor to develop a signature lightsaber style. To populate the rest of the Jedi army, Gillard enlisted more than 100 fighters from sword clubs around Australia. He then spent a few days rehearsing with his new recruits, putting them through Jedi boot camp and adjusting their fight styles to be lightsaber-friendly. "I mostly remember the weekend I spent in Byron Bay trying to convince this wild kendo group to come and film with us," Gillard recalls. "They lived in the woods. I learned a lot about primeval forest tree sap that weekend... Enlightening!"



ESIS

AS THE SKYWALKER SAGA ENDS WITH *EPISODE IX*, GO BEHIND THE MOST IMPORTANT SCENES FROM EACH MOVIE IN THE JOURNEY

BY JAMES HIBBERD & DEVAN COGGAN



Episode III

REVENGE *OF THE* SITH

SCENE → ANAKIN FIGHTS OBI-WAN

The prequel trilogy's most devastating moment was the one that was fated all along: the brutal duel between Obi-Wan and Anakin. The master and apprentice finally clash on the molten planet of Mustafar. The fight that ensues is a whirlwind—a confrontation between former allies who know each other's every strength and weakness. When Obi-Wan croaks, "You were my brother, Anakin," it isn't just the end of a years-long friendship; it adds a heartbreaking new layer to Darth Vader and Obi-Wan's original duel in *A New Hope*.

When choreographing the Mustafar battle, Gillard treated it as "the mother of all fights." Filming the entire sequence took about a week, but McGregor and Christensen rehearsed for two months until they could nail every kick, spin, and jump. The entire path of the fight had the actors traveling one kilometer and through seven different soundstages. "Obi and Anakin had to be really similar, as one taught the other, but Ewan moves very differently to Hayden, so the differences are very subtle," Gillard explains. "When you saw them at full speed in the rehearsal room, it was a thing to behold." Obi-Wan ultimately bests his apprentice, but it's no victory: Anakin Skywalker dies, and Darth Vader rises.

Episode IV

A NEW HOPE

SCENE → THE ATTACK RUN ON THE DEATH STAR

The climactic Rebel attack on the Death Star in *A New Hope* stands as the most iconic space battle sequence in movie history, which is all the more impressive considering its retro special effects were created 44 years ago using ships cobbled together from modeling kits in a sweltering warehouse. It was so hot during filming, in fact, star Mark Hamill notes Rebel pilots only wore the tops of their costumes and sat in their "Bermuda shorts and sandals" while taking turns in a single X-wing cockpit that all the actors shared. Yet the masterfully edited 13-minute battle evolved in at least one key way during filming. Originally there wasn't just one deadly trench encircling the Death Star, but several. There are clues to this in a script from January 1976, a few months before filming started, where there are references to multiple Death Star trenches, and at one point a confused Blue Leader asks, "Is this the right trench?" Accordingly, the special-effects team led by John Dykstra originally constructed three trenches, each with a different width. The idea was that as the fighters got closer to their target ("Al-most... there..."), the trenches would get narrower and more perilous. "Somewhere along the line it was decided to do it all with the [narrowest] trench because it was so much more dramatic," recalls special-effects pioneer Dennis Muren. "That way you had more stuff racing by the camera on the walls and a narrower area to fly in, so ships had to be more careful." The result was an action sequence that was truly one in a million.



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"REMEMBER... THE FORCE WILL

OBI-WAN KENOBI IN *EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE*

Episode V

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

SCENE → "I AM YOUR FATHER"

It's been called the greatest movie twist in cinema: Fearsome Sith cyborg mass murderer Darth Vader (voiced by James Earl Jones) is revealed to be the father of earnest, heroic farm boy Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill). The revelation was shocking and disturbing (Luke's father is not only alive, but his mortal enemy?!). And it worked, screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan says, because every previous scene in *Empire* was created with the big revelation in mind. "All this energy and all this storytelling that preceded it was aimed at this tiny spot," Kasdan says of the scene. "It's like if you were trying to get to Mars and you were one degree off, you wouldn't get there. That's what the scene was like for all of us. How do we get there at the perfect time, the perfect place, and have it just absolutely blow people's minds?" Secrecy was paramount, even on set. The script said Vader tells Luke that Obi-Wan Kenobi killed his father. Hamill wasn't told the truth until moments before the scene was shot ("I was as shocked as the audience would later be," Hamill says). But filming the scene was made even more challenging by the use of loud wind machines. Hamill not only couldn't hear Vader body actor David Prowse say his lines, but couldn't even hear himself. Hamill says that a big *Star Wars* original-trilogy secret is that more than half the dialogue was recorded in postproduction due to all the intrusive noises from smoke and wind machines, prop effects, and even clunking robots. "C-3PO doesn't sound like metal, he sounds like fiberglass," Hamill notes. The new dialogue surprised more than just moviegoers: Hamill recalls that even costar Harrison Ford was stunned. "Harrison turned to me and said, 'Hey, you didn't f---ing tell me that.' "





Episode VI

RETURN *OF THE* JEDI

SCENE → DARTH VADER STANDS UP TO EMPEROR PALPATINE

The reason Emperor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid) returns for *The Rise of Skywalker* might actually come down to how this climactic scene in *Return of the Jedi* made a big impression on a young J.J. Abrams. "I remember being terrified of [the Emperor] as a kid," the director recalls. "You can't say enough about a guy as self-involved, selfish, power-hungry, and despicable as he is. Everybody looks at Vader as the ultimate bad guy, but you have to remember he had a boss." And no scene in the original trilogy conveys the Emperor's seething menace like the three-way face-off between Vader, Palpatine, and Luke in the second Death Star throne room. Co-writer Lawrence Kasdan describes the sequence as an attempted seduction. "He's trying to seduce Luke [to the dark side] and talks about Vader as if he weren't even there," Kasdan points out. The sequence also introduces Force lightning for the first time, a device that solved a problem for the writers. "What you're longing for at the moment is for things to ratchet up in a way that we've not seen in three movies," Kasdan says. "[The Emperor] is the most powerful guy in the galaxy, he must have other weapons." Vader throws his tyrannical master into the space station's reactor core, seemingly killing him, but Kasdan points out the power of the Force to transcend death was firmly established in *A New Hope* when Ben Kenobi (Alec Guinness) tells Vader he can return even more formidable after death. "Nothing is forever in this saga," Kasdan says, "so you're always a little skeptical."

BE WITH YOU, ALWAYS.”

Episode VII

THE FORCE AWAKENS

SCENE → REY FORCE-GRABS LUKE’S LIGHTSABER

Cheers, then puzzlement, then debate. The *Force Awakens* scene at Starkiller Base where orphaned scavenger Rey (Daisy Ridley) Force-grabs Luke Skywalker’s lightsaber away from Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) is a moment of joyous surprise that had audiences applauding. Yet the move has also long provoked curiosity about its meaning. Namely: If Kylo is a Skywalker and has received training, how was Rey able to pull away Luke’s lightsaber? Co-writer Kasdan explains: “Rey is full of the Force—you know that pretty early on. You know she’s not unimportant. The saber flies into her hand because it belongs in her hand, while the secret to Kylo is that he’s massively insecure. He wants to be Darth II, but he isn’t because he’s very conflicted about everything he wants. So when it flies by him into her hand, everything he worries about is confirmed.” Ridley, meanwhile, thinks the moment is “f---ing amazing” and has a reply for anyone who debates Rey’s abilities: “We’re running around in space, guys, don’t make rules.” Perhaps *The Rise of Skywalker* will shed more light, but even on its own it remains a moment of triumph.



COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

- PONDA BABA
- MACE WINDU
- ZAM WESELL

Episode VIII

THE LAST JEDI

SCENE → LUKE SKYWALKER BATTLES KYLO REN



Almost four decades after his fateful fight with the Emperor in *Return of the Jedi*, we finally saw Luke Skywalker reignite his lightsaber. Rian Johnson’s *The Last Jedi* culminates with a tense skirmish between the aging Luke and his apprentice-turned-nemesis Kylo Ren, bringing the Battle of Crait to a standstill as the two swordsmen clash. “The brief was to try and make it feel like a standoff or a Western gun shoot-out,” stunt coordinator Rob Inch explains. The *Star Wars* saga has a long history of dramatic master-pupil duels, but what sets the Luke-Kylo confrontation apart is the reveal that Luke isn’t actually there; he’s Force-projecting his image from parsecs away. That meant Inch had to choreograph a whirling lightsaber battle where the lightsabers couldn’t actually touch, misdirecting the audience with the speed and intensity of the fight. “It’s more about the acting piece than the actual physicality of it,” he says. “There’s the standoff moment, the quick trades of places, the gripping onto the hilt of a sword, the push of a foot.... It kind of reminds me of a medieval jousting sequence.” Hamill came to rehearsals bursting with ideas for choreography, while Inch says Driver had only one request: “Wherever I tried to slip in a stunt double for Adam, that was never going to happen,” Inch recalls with a laugh. “He was very keen to do his own work because he does such a great job.”

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COMMON KNOWLEDGE ANSWERS *P. 37* Musical performers *P. 39* Boonta Eve Classic Podrace pilots *P. 40* Members of the Hutt clan *P. 43* Lost a limb to a lightsaber

HERE WE S

Do you want to build a sequel? Six years after *Frozen*, the stars and filmmakers behind the biggest animated



A haunting voice and four cryptic crystal symbols propel Elsa (Idina Menzel) into a powerful mystery about her past

NOW AGAIN

movie of all time return with a darker, dangerous Disney sequel. BY MARC SNETIKER @*MARCSNETIKER*

AVALANCHE

…IS, WELL, A STRONG WORD. Snowball is too. Yet both powerful weather wonders—one instantly explosive, one steadily expansive—aptly describe the storm that covered the world after the release of Disney's 2013 animated musical, *Frozen*. Six years, two Oscars, two Grammys, theme-park attractions, LEGO sets, lunch boxes, a line of toddler all-terrain vehicles, and $1.3 billion at the box office later, you'd need to overturn a rock to find an adult who hasn't heard "Let It Go" yet turn only to a neighbor to find a household still caught in the film's flurry of catchy songs, catchphrase snowmen, and trope-bucking princesses. *Frozen* fever, they called it once, and now climatologists and cartoonists alike can see it coming again: With the Nov. 22 release of *Frozen 2*, the cast and creators of Disney's record-shattering hit might just unleash another winter phenomenon—but this time, they're keeping their cool.

"Was I nervous about doing a second one? Absolutely not," says Kristen Bell, who voices the perennially optimistic, fearlessly awkward Princess Anna. "If you bake a cake and it's perfect, and then you bake a second one with the same ingredients, statistics will tell you that you're gonna have a great cake." Idina Menzel, whose powerhouse performance as empathetic enchantress Elsa sent the Broadway star everywhere from the Oscars to the Super Bowl, calls it "reuniting with your family—with people that you've had this wonderful success with, but people you trust and love and feel like you're in good hands with." Yet the circumstances surrounding this reunion of Arendelle royals can't be ignored. "I do find that because so many milestones were hit, I am a little bit more in tune to expectations that are result-oriented, and I don't like that feeling because it's not where we came from the first time," admits Menzel. "I knew that if [returning directors] Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee felt it was the right time to do the sequel, they were only going to do it because they weren't coming from any materialistic place, that they felt there was an important reason to tell this next story."

↓ Sven, Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), Olaf (Josh Gad), Anna (Kristen Bell), and Elsa (Idina Menzel) size up their next challenge: an enchanted forest







↑ **From top** Sterling K. Brown joins the cast as Lieutenant Mattias (left, with Anna), an Arendelle soldier, trapped in the bewitched woods; Elsa charms a fire-powered salamander named Bruni whose ferocity is matched only by adorability

That story began with a question the filmmakers heard regularly during *Frozen*'s global tour: How did Elsa get her powers? It was a mystery only Buck and Lee—not the myriad spin-off storybooks cooked up elsewhere within Disney—could answer on the big screen. *Frozen 2* picks up a few years after the first movie, with a tranquil autumn in Arendelle suddenly threatened by an unexplained burst of elemental magic tied to Elsa's past; the sisters' subsequent journey to find answers in an enchanted forest (accompanied by Josh Gad's still-naive snowman Olaf and Jonathan Groff's still-hot mountaineer Kristoff) is darker, scarier, and deals directly with life-or-death stakes—but Lee, who also co-wrote the screenplay, says that's a distinction of, not a deviation from, the *Frozen* DNA.

"If you put them side by side, tonally they're actually very similar—*Frozen* 1 gets pretty dark with a man trying to murder both girls, you know?" says Lee, who nevertheless, with Buck and returning producer Peter Del Vecho, faced a challenge in evolving the narrative while also liberating it from its own popularity. "One thing that did concern us was, because of the success of the little girls in Elsa dresses all showing up to the party, people might forget what that ride of *Frozen* actually was, in terms of being a more sophisticated story. It wasn't just 'the dress' or 'the magic.' So we had to make sure that we didn't age it down but we only kept growing and maturing." Such evolution applied especially to the high expectations for the film's soundtrack, which boasts seven new tunes (including an '80s power ballad sung by Groff and *two* showstoppers for Elsa) written by in-demand songwriting spouses Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. "We all got on board early with the idea of this being kind of the second act of a Broadway musical, where we could go deeper, go richer, go more emotional with the songs," says Buck. "But we did not try to get another 'Let It Go.' That was lightning in a bottle. We wanted this movie to find its own voice."

"IT FELT LIKE A SNOWBALL THAT JUST KEPT ROLLING DOWN A HILL AND GETTING BIGGER AND BIGGER."

—Director Jennifer Lee on the franchise's surprise success

And that's the eye of the storm, perhaps, the quiet truth at the center of why *Frozen* has lingered so long and stands to swell again (for the second time in forever): It recognizes and rejoices in the power of finding one's voice—no matter whether it belongs to an anxious princess, a belting tween, or an actress fulfilling a dormant dream in both. Bell calls the idiosyncratic Anna "the Disney princess I needed to see when I was 11 years old, someone who was goofy and quirky and stumbled over her words. I was shocked at the level of investment where she felt like my baby." And Menzel, who has made *Frozen* a staple of her concerts for half a decade, has grown no less susceptible to the emotions Elsa can inspire. "When people refer to you as a role model, with that comes great responsibility, and it happened to me with Elphaba from *Wicked* as well," she shares. "Those characters actually help me be a better human being. There's a pressure to practice what you preach, and [they're] often kicking my ass in gear on the days where I don't feel like getting out of bed. So Elsa's this amazing little reminder to me, no matter how old we are as women, to understand what makes us extraordinary in the world and to never apologize for that." Let the reign begin. ●



PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS SPREAD: DISNEY (4)

B R E A K I



NG BIG

10 ARTISTS WHO MADE NOISE IN 2019—AND PLAN TO MAKE MORE IN 2020

Andrew Scott

BREAKOUT MOMENT As "Hot Priest" on Amazon's Emmy-winning *Fleabag*, Andrew Scott's charm and devilish wit made us all question our faith.

UP NEXT Starring opposite Benedict Cumberbatch in Sam Mendes' WWI drama *1917* (Dec. 25) and playing literary con artist Tom Ripley on Showtime's upcoming *Ripley*, as well as appearing in season 2 of HBO's *His Dark Materials*.

ON HIS ARDENT FAN BASE Scott doesn't want to be defined as just one thing. But for now, the 43-year-old Dublin native is happy to bear the moniker of Hot Priest. Since playing the dreamy cleric in *Fleabag*'s second season—and showcasing some serious onscreen chemistry with costar Phoebe Waller-Bridge—he has developed a much different fan base than in his days as *Sherlock*'s ruthless villain Moriarty; typical reactions now include "Strangle me!" and "Hear my sins!" "Then, when they meet you in real life," Scott notes, "they're like, 'Hello, I really enjoy your work.'"

UNORTHODOX CHOICES When one character "becomes too hot," as the actor puts it, it's time to look for the next big thing. "I like playing with all those different sides of yourself without losing yourself," he says. True to form, Scott has three upcoming projects that he calls "slightly left of center. That's always what I'm looking for." In *1917*, "there's nowhere to hide" because the WWI film from director Mendes was shot to look like one continuous take. Scott likes to think of it as "a very expensive film [made] on your iPhone. You can't cut away." The actor is also eager to put his stamp on Ripley ("an iconic literary character") on Showtime's take on the Patricia Highsmith novels.

FINDING HIS RELIGION On *His Dark Materials*, Scott is on the other side of the cloth as John Parry, traveler in an alternate reality controlled by an authoritarian religious institution.

"Those books are really important for kids," Scott says of the Philip Pullman trilogy that inspired the series. "It teaches them about goodness and kindness in the world." Growing up as a gay man in the Catholic Church, Scott faced his own struggles with faith, making him appreciate "the ethics" of *His Dark Materials*. "You can be a good person in the world [without] organized religion."

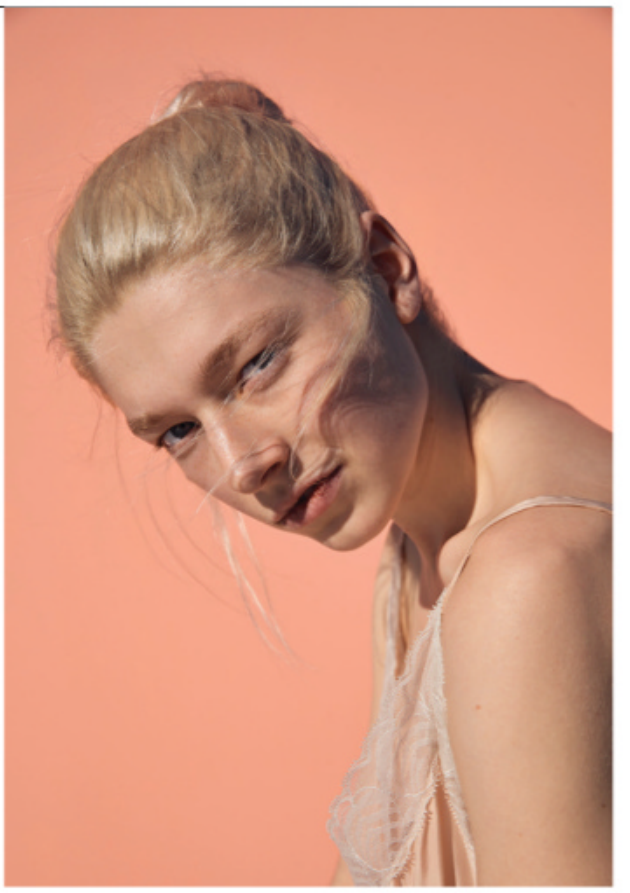
That said, between all his new career adventures, Scott says, "people will forget about the Hot Priest." Blasphemy. *—Nick Romano*



HOLDING COURT AS MORIARTY ON *SHERLOCK*



AS *FLEABAG*'S UNHOLY MAN



Hunter SCHAFER

BREAKOUT MOMENT In her first-ever acting role, Hunter Schafer shines (and glitters) as Jules, a magnetic trans student on HBO's provocative teen drama *Euphoria*.

UP NEXT Season 2 of the series, and exploring roles further away from her own identity. "I'm really curious to not have the character map readily available," she says.

ART IMITATING LIFE Schafer, 20, never considered a career in acting until HBO approached her with the chance to play a lead on Sam Levinson's buzzy new series. "I was working as a full-time model in New York when the casting team for *Euphoria* reached out to my modeling agency," she tells EW. "I gave it a shot and it snowballed from there." The novice actress drew on her own experience as a transgender teen to inform her performance: "I felt more capable of playing her because [of the] parallels between us."

ON REPRESENTING Since the show's launch, fans have flocked to the series, grateful to finally see someone like themselves portrayed: "It's been really sweet to have some close moments with people who are excited about seeing a trans person on TV." *—Ruth Kinane*

SCOTT: AARON RICHTER/CONTOUR RA/GETTY IMAGES; FLEABAG: AMAZON; SHAFER: MAGDALENA WOSINSKA



Kate Elizabeth Russell

BREAKOUT MOMENT She sold her debut novel, *My Dark Vanessa*, in the seven figures last fall—the highest price tag of the season.

UP NEXT The book publishes next March, and Hollywood is already circling. Safe bet an adaptation is on the way.

HER CINDERELLA MOMENT Kate Elizabeth Russell was teaching creative writing at the University of Kansas when she got the biggest phone call of her life. Her book had just been acquired for north of $1 million. "I had to run out of the classroom," she recalls. "My students sat there like, 'What is going on?'" For a debut author, it all sounds like a fairy tale.

ON #METOO FALLOUT Russell, now 35, first started writing *Vanessa*'s characters when she was 16. She came to grips, through fiction, with the relationships she had with older men as a teenager. She continued working into her Ph.D. program, and then the #MeToo movement exploded. It's at the center of the completed book: A teacher's former student accuses him of sexual misconduct, forcing the protagonist, Vanessa, to reflect on her own toxic affair with the man. "I realized that my book was going to be read in the context of that movement anyway," she says. "So I might as well address it head-on." That she does—and the results are thrilling. *—David Canfield*

Natasha Rothwell

BREAKOUT MOMENT Playing Kelli, the confident, tequila-loving diva on HBO's *Insecure*.

UP NEXT Portraying a career woman in the comedy *Like a Boss* (Jan. 10); roles in *Sonic the Hedgehog* (Feb. 14) and *Wonder Woman 1984* (June 5).

ON KELLI VS. NATASHA For someone whose most memorable TV moments include indulging in under-the-table sexploits at a Hollywood diner and getting Tasered at Coachella, Natasha Rothwell is pretty low-key. "One of the things I love about playing Kelli is she's so unapologetic," says the actress, 39. "Because in my real life, I bumped into a table this morning and apologized to it."

FIRST JOB Rothwell acted in employee training videos for an insurance company. "It was this whole song and dance where the magical HR person sort of manifested, genie-style," she recalls. She'll be channeling a different kind of superpower in *Wonder Woman 1984*: "It's such a testament to femininity and feminism, and to do it in the '80s?" says Rothwell, her voice rising to Kelli-esque levels. "The costumes *alone*." *—Clarissa Cruz*



RUSSELL: ELENA SEIBERT; ROTHWELL: SALLY MONTANA/REDUX



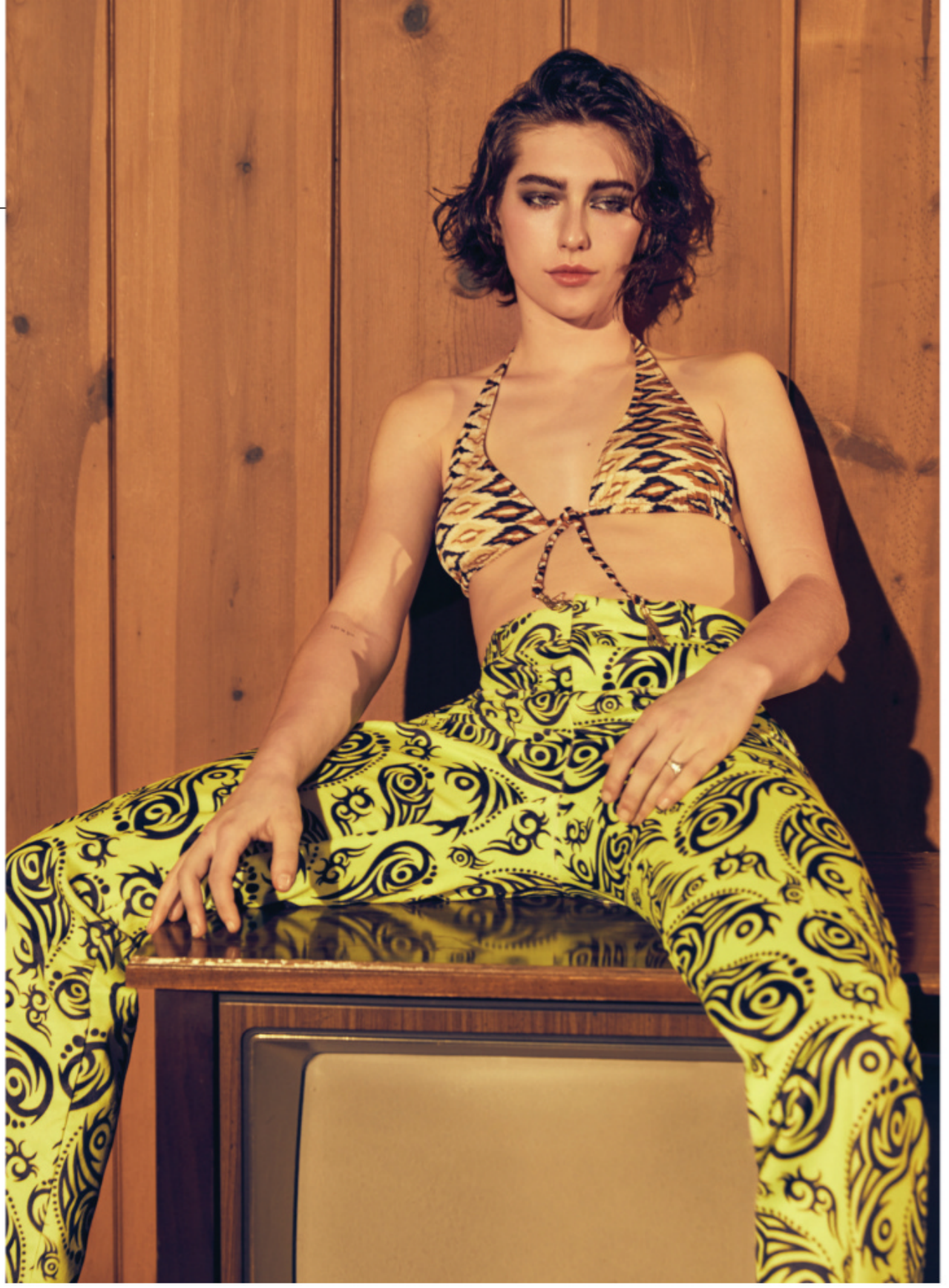
Kelvin HARRISON JR.

BREAKOUT MOMENT As Tyler, the son in a wealthy African-American family whose world begins to crumble, in the movie *Waves*.

UP NEXT Starring opposite Issa Rae and LaKeith Stanfield in *The Photograph* (Feb. 14), and Dakota Johnson and Tracee Ellis Ross in *Covers* (May 8).

ALL ROADS LEAD TO STERLING K. BROWN They say never meet your heroes, but don't tell that to Kelvin Harrison Jr. The actor, 25, viewed Sterling K. Brown as a model for his own career, and rewatched his scenes from *The People v. O.J. Simpson* (Brown played prosecutor Christopher Darden) like they were curriculum. Fast-forward to a few years later, and that admiring dynamic bled into Harrison's breakout role in *Waves*. He portrays Tyler, the hyperachieving son of Brown's stern patriarch. The two play brilliantly off each other—particularly as things unravel. "Sterling listened to me," Harrison says. "He empowered me to have my own voice."

ON BRANCHING OUT Though he can carry the heaviest of scenes, Harrison's gearing up for work on the lighter side—in 2020, he stars in the A-list comedies *The Photograph* and *Covers*. "I'm excited to branch out," he says. "Expand into sci-fi, expand into fantasy, expand into romance. Just continue to grow." —*DC*



KING PRINCESS

BREAKOUT MOMENT Her first single, the vintage pop throwback "1950," which has been streamed more than 300 million times since its debut in February 2018.

UP NEXT The nationwide *Cheap Queen* tour, running through Feb. 14.

ON HER FOLLOWING In her short but buzzy time as a professional musician, King Princess, 20, has developed her own community of fervent queer female fans. But for the singer-songwriter born Mikaela Straus, it's not something she fully expected to happen. "My shows are definitely a point of gathering for gay women, and [I'm] interested in what's happening with them because I was not a part of a community when I was a kid that looked like this—outwardly female and gay," she tells EW.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN There's a method behind the glamorous midtempo grooves of her debut album, *Cheap Queen*. "I used a lot of local, weird, choppy vocal samples and, like, vintage-y sounding stuff mixed with new drum sounds," she says, adding that her mentor, überproducer Mark Ronson—he signed Straus to his Zelig Records imprint in 2017—said "you can make s--- sound old, but what makes it modern is drums and bass. I thought that was really concise and beautiful because it's really how I work." —*Kerensa Cadenas*

HARRISON: SEBASTIAN KIM/AUGUST; KING PRINCESS: DANIELLE LEVITT/AUGUST

Megan Thee Stallion



BREAKOUT MOMENT Her May 2019 mixtape *Fever,* which sparked this year's inescapable Hot Girl Summer movement.

UP NEXT The rapper, 24, will continue releasing singles into next year. She also confirms that she's finally ready for a debut album—but may give fans a sequel to her 2018 mixtape *Tina Snow* first.

ON GOING VIRAL Hearing Megan Thee Stallion talk about how successful her year was shows why her fans, affectionately known as the Hotties, look to the Houston native for an epic confidence boost. "I feel like I took over a whole season," the rapper born Megan Pete tells EW. "You can't even think about summer without thinking about the hot girl. We did what had to be done."

THE ART OF THE TWERK Megan's energetic shows have gained notoriety as well, with the *Fever* artist calling them a safe place for twerking. Videos of her perched on stage dancing—all reinforced by her enviable "Vibranium knees," which she jokingly notes feed off of "a mixture of D'USSÉ, stamina, and vitamins"—often go as viral as her empowering, tongue-in-cheek rhymes. (Sample line: "Yeah I'm in my bag, but I'm in his, too," from her song "Cash S---" with DaBaby).

BITTERSWEET SYMPHONY Though the past 12 months have turned Megan into a household meme (if not yet name), she's also hit a devastating moment in her personal life, losing her mother to brain cancer in March. Publicly, with the love of her Hotties, the rapper remains positive, giving a reminder to all to "Always keep your head up, and just know that you that bitch." —*Marcus Jones*

MUNACHI OSEGBU



ASANTE BLACKK

BREAKOUT MOMENT His role as Kevin Richardson in Netflix's Central Park Five miniseries *When They See Us*.
UP NEXT He has joined *This Is Us* as Malik, a thoughtful, straight-A high schooler caring for his infant daughter.
CHANNELING HIS INNER CHILD For *When They See Us*—which followed a group of black teenagers wrongly convicted of assault and rape—the then 16-year-old worked diligently with director/co-writer Ava DuVernay to strip away his own confidence and turn in a poignant portrait of a frightened teen trapped in a racist legal system. "We were trying to focus on 'How do we make it feel younger?' and 'How do we take away that Asante swag?' " says Blackk, 18. "It was a process of me going back into middle school, where I identified with Kevin a lot more. That's where I can make him feel younger, more fragile, more innocent." Blackk's performance—in his first role that wasn't a school play—earned him an Emmy nod.
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE Now on *This Is Us*, he plays another misunderstood character. "What isn't always present when you take your first glance is so interesting to me," he says. "Every single person on this earth is living a life that's just as complex as our own."
—Dan Snierson

David Corenswet



BREAKING MOMENT He stole Ben Platt's heart (and conscience) as high school presidential candidate River on Netflix's *The Politician*.
UP NEXT He's staying in the Ryan Murphy family, returning for season 2 of *The Politician* and starting in and producing the limited series *Hollywood*.
ON HIS DOPPELGÄNGER He knows you think he looks like Henry Cavill. "My pie-in-the-sky ambition is to play Superman," says the actor, 26. So it's fitting that his upcoming role in *Hollywood* has a few old-fashioned similarities to the Man of Steel. "My character has a certain optimism, a lack of jadedness."
FATHER KNOWS BEST When he found out the role of River on *The Politician* was being bumped up to a series regular, David Corenswet had a pinch-me moment. He was with his late father when the good news came. "I [handed] the phone to my dad and [said], 'Tell me if it says what I think it says.' He read it and said, 'I think this is it. This is the one.' " *—Maureen Lee Lenker*



Maya HAWKE

BREAKOUT MOMENT On *Stranger Things 3*, Maya Hawke's ice-cream-scooping Robin not only helped save Hawkins, Ind., from creatures and Russians but also broke ground as the series' first LGBTQ character.
UP NEXT Currently recording an album; starring opposite Andrew Garfield in *Mainstream* (out next year).
ON OPENING MINDS In a series filled with special effects and CGI monsters, one of the most exhilarating moments of *Stranger Things*' third season was Robin's coming out to co-worker Steve (Joe Keery). The 21-year-old actress hopes that her performance as Robin may have opened some eyes and hearts. "I always have loved that she came out in the end," she says. "It's a family show that is multinational and bipartisan. People like it in the red states and in the blue states. It's an important thing when shows that have that wide a reach make an effort to introduce different kinds of people into their lens."
FASHION TIPS FROM DAD *Things*' popularity also means Hawke's own public visibility has increased in the past year. Thankfully, famous parents (she's the offspring of Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke) can help with coping mechanisms. Quips the actress, "A strategy I learned from my dad actually is dressing like a somewhat homeless person, and then nobody bothers you."
—Tim Stack

BLACKK: MICAIAH CARTER/NETFLIX; HAWKE: HEIDI TAPPIS; CORENSWET: BLAIR GETZ MEZIBOV;



HOLLYWOOD TRUE CRIME

OVER TH

MUSIC, MAYHEM

PETER IVERS hosted a cult-classic TV show, wrote music for David Lynch's *Eraserhead*, opened for



Peter Ivers on the roof of his Los Angeles apartment in 1981

THE EDGE & MURDER IN L.A.

Fleetwood Mac...and ended up bludgeoned to death. Who wanted him gone—and why? BY CLARK COLLIS @CLARKCOLLIS

LATE ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON,

it is clear the gentrification that has reshaped so much of Los Angeles' downtown over the past decade has yet to fully flower on this particular stretch of 3rd Street. A few blocks away, you'll find the chic literary emporium the Last Bookstore and crowds heading toward the culinary delights of Grand Central Market. But here, the stores are selling wholesale cigarettes and smoking "apparatus"—while the few pedestrians must walk around a homeless man sleeping by the entrance of an urgent-care clinic. Even so, the neighborhood is much improved from its condition in the 1970s and '80s, according to retired Los Angeles Police Department detective Cliff Shepard.

"That was my patrol area when I was working the foot beat [in the mid-'70s]," says Shepard. "[It was] terrible." On March 3, 1983, Shepard was on his daily commute when the report of a homicide in the area caught his attention. "I heard on the news that somebody involved in Hollywood who had been living in the area had been murdered in his apartment," he says. "The thought to me was 'If somebody from Hollywood is living in Skid Row, he's nuts.' "

The victim was a boyish-faced 36-year-old singer, songwriter, harmonica player, and TV host named Peter Ivers. A neighbor in an adjoining loft discovered Ivers' body in the musician's sixth-floor dwelling on the afternoon of March 3. His head had been bludgeoned. An autopsy revealed he died from massive fractures of the skull with brain injury.

The day after Ivers' body was found, the police stated there were no suspects in the case. No one was ever arrested for Ivers' murder, and his death remains a mystery. There are numerous theories about what might have occurred in that loft, although almost four decades later, the number of people considering the matter, or who remember Ivers at all, is small. Even the dramatic manner of his passing has not cemented Ivers' place in history. Given the lack of commercial success he had during his lifetime, that isn't a huge shock—though it is a shame, at least according to his friend Van Dyke Parks, the legendary songwriter and Beach Boys lyricist. "He did not get his just deserts," Parks says. "That should not make me angry. But it sure does make me sad."

Perhaps it is fitting that Ivers' name does not register to most in the mainstream, given how he enjoyed working and living on the fringes—introducing bands such as the Dead Kennedys and Fear on TV while spouting off head-scratching manifesto rhetoric like "Why glow in the dark when you can dance on Superman's grave?" "He was in a kind of world of his own," says Ivers' friend David Lynch. But without Ivers, diverse aspects of pop culture—from Lynch's full-length directorial debut, *Eraserhead*, to the punk scene to even MTV—might have wound up as different entities. He was the most adventurous and fearless of artists, and while the details of his death remain mysterious, those qualities may have in some way led to his early passing. Or, as Lucy Fisher, his longtime girlfriend and now Hollywood producer puts it, "Peter liked the edge."

FOR IVERS, SOMETIMES "THE EDGE" MEANT MOVING INTO A dangerous neighborhood, and sometimes it meant getting booed mercilessly by a crowd while opening for one of the biggest bands in the world. That's what happened to the singer in the late summer of 1976 when he supported Fleetwood Mac at Los Angeles' Universal Amphitheatre. "Oh God, the night from hell," says Fisher with a shudder. Fisher's recollection of that night is that Ivers came out in a diaper and was then heckled. "The audience was not prepared for him," she says. "They just wanted Fleetwood Mac, and they really did not understand any of the conceptual-art stuff he was doing." While the Fleetwood Mac show was something of a professional nadir for Ivers, it was not out of character. "Peter was an inveterate iconoclast," says Parks. "His general demeanor was antiauthoritarian."

Ivers grew up just outside of Boston in Brookline, Mass., and was encouraged in his artistic pursuits by his mother, Merle. He later attended Harvard, immersing himself in a theater scene whose members included Stockard Channing, John Lithgow, and Tommy Lee Jones. In his second year at college, Ivers took up the harmonica, a choice that hinted at his individualist streak. "One of the things that made him so singular was the harmonica," says Parks. "The herd was stampeding to either guitars or the piano. The harmonica put him in a singular place."

That place led to a record deal with Epic, but Ivers' debut album, 1969's *Knight of the Blue Communion*, was a commercial failure and he was soon dropped by the label. A move to California with Fisher—who began dating the musician while in college—led to work scoring films for young directors like former college classmate Tim Hunter (who would later direct 1987's *River's Edge*), and Ivers nabbed another record deal, this time with Warner Bros. However, his two Warner albums (1974's *Terminal Love* and 1976's *Peter Ivers*) underperformed, the idiosyncratic tunes having more in common with the new-wave sound of the late '70s than anything popular at the

↓ As host of the TV show *New Wave Theater* in the early '80s, Ivers (in glasses) showcased punk bands and routinely wore flamboyant outfits



PREVIOUS SPREAD: GEORGE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE: GARY LEONARD/LAPL



↑ For Ivers, hosting (top) and performing (bottom) on *New Wave Theater* indulged his exhibitionist side. Says former girlfriend Lucy Fisher, "In the course of a day, he would traverse so many different levels of society."

time. "He was an intellectual pop artist," says Lynch. "You could say he was ahead of his time."

With Ivers' antics opening for Fleetwood Mac failing to galvanize sales, the singer-songwriter once again found himself without a label, so he moved back into soundtrack work, overseeing the music for Ron Howard's 1977 directorial debut, *Grand Theft Auto*. "[Film] executives liked him," says drummer Russell Buddy Helm. "He could talk the talk. He contacted me for Ron Howard's thing, and Peter recorded some of his own songs on Ron's money—which was really his alternative motive. [*Laughs*] Ron was cool. He came in, he didn't mind."

Lynch was feeling fraught when he first approached Ivers about writing the music for a song to appear in his 1977 debut feature, *Eraserhead*. "I was really embarrassed about my lyrics because they're so simple," says Lynch. "Pete said, 'No, I love them.' I came back to Pete's house two weeks later. He laid down on his bed, propped himself up on pillows, took a microphone, and sang right in front of me what is in the film." The haunting "In Heaven" (performed by the voluminously cheeked "Lady in the Radiator") stands as Ivers' most notable contribution to both music and film, and has been covered by acts such as the Pixies, Bauhaus, and Devo.

"It's almost childish, the song," says Devo bassist Jerry Casale. "But it was dark and foreboding at the same time. It was like a nursery rhyme turned on its

DEAD KENNEDYS: PETER NOBLE/REDFERNS; BAD RELIGION: GARY LEONARD/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES; THE BLASTERS: JANETTE BECKMAN/GETTY IMAGES; FEAR: GEORGE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES

WHEN TV WENT PUNK

In the early '80s, Peter Ivers brought cutting-edge music to public-access TV in Los Angeles. Here are some of the pioneering bands that rocked *New Wave Theater*. BY CLARK COLLIS



DEAD KENNEDYS
The punk icons performed their song "Holiday in Cambodia" on the show, as shirtless frontman Jello Biafra attempted to avoid moshing stage invaders.



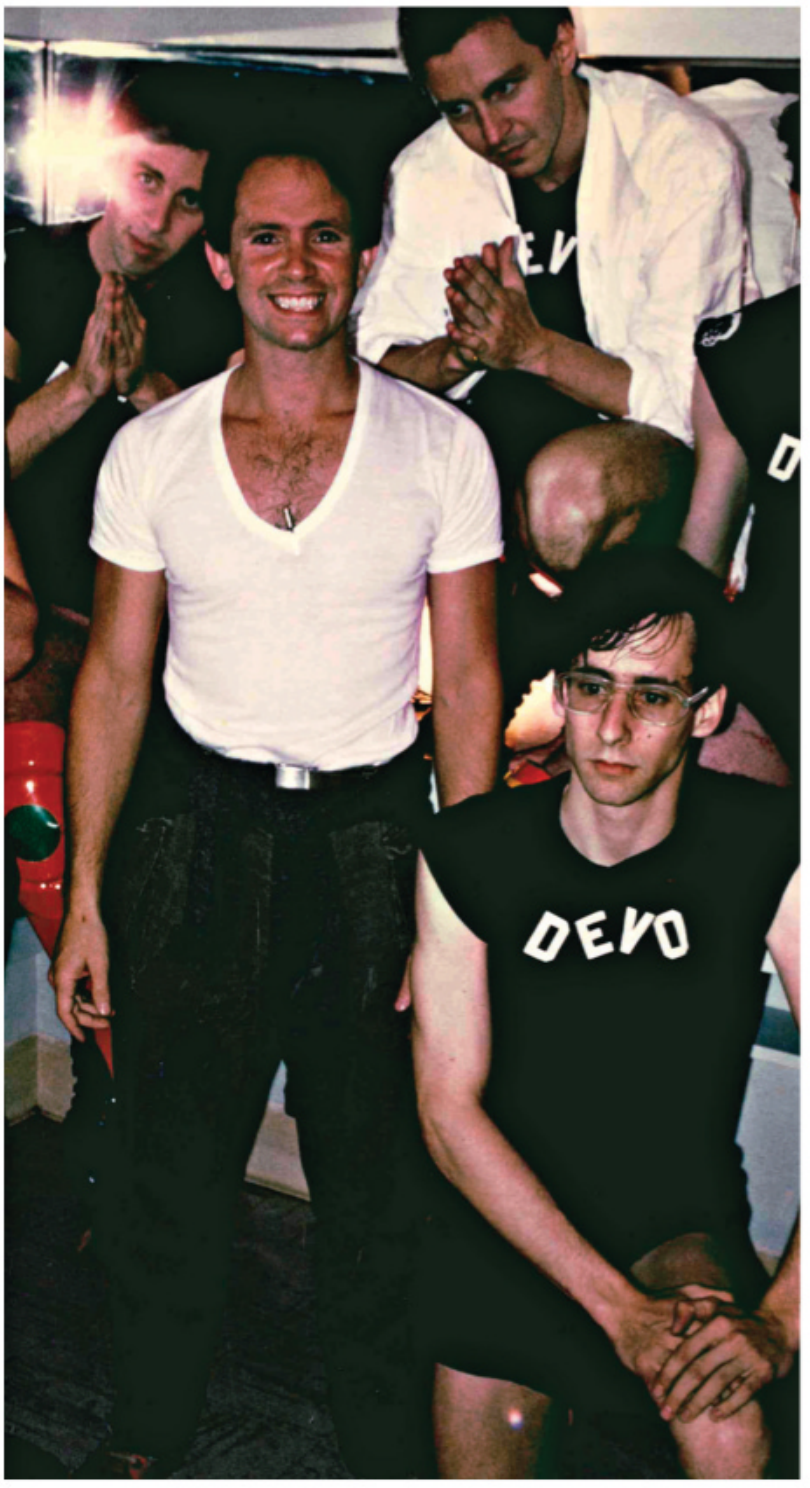
BAD RELIGION
Ivers introduced the L.A. band as "high-speed tough guys from Purgatory Beach." He later quizzed them on whether "mankind is by nature bad or good."



THE BLASTERS
A harmonica-blowing Ivers jammed with the group before he introduced them with actress and guest presenter (or "ghost host") Beverly D'Angelo.



FEAR
The hardcore act's appearance reportedly inspired John Belushi to get them booked on *Saturday Night Live* for an infamously chaotic Halloween show.



↑ Ivers (second from left) around 1980 with members of the band Devo, who covered "In Heaven," a song co-written by Ivers and director David Lynch for Lynch's breakthrough film *Eraserhead*

head." Casale met Ivers when the band visited Los Angeles. "He knew everybody," says Casale. "He was everywhere on any given night. He was quite a larger-than-life character." Ivers had a wide and diverse circle of friends, from musicians to video artists to Hollywood notables and up-and-comers like Lynch, *Animal House* co-writer Doug Kenney, John Belushi, and actor-director Harold Ramis, who would help produce Ivers' early-'80s stage project *Vitamin Pink Fantasy Revue*. "He was such a touchstone for so many people in so many different walks of life," says Fisher. "That was one of his other major gifts." If only the artist could find the perfect outlet for his equally irreverent personality and music.

IVERS' EXHIBITIONIST SIDE WOULD BE GIVEN FREE REIN IN the early '80s when he started to host the L.A. cable access show *New Wave Theater*. The program was conceived by producer David Jove (born David Sniderman), an enigmatic figure who, while calling himself Acid King, had reportedly supplied the drugs for which Rolling Stones members Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were infamously arrested in 1967 at Richards' country home, Redlands. (Both were acquitted.) "David Jove was a fledgling artist, director, gang leader of the freaks and misfits that made up his own cast of really odd people," says another Ivers friend, musician Peter Rafelson. "They would come and hang out in a small retail shop that he had converted into a cave without light covered in trinkets, knickknacks, pictures."

Jove conceived *New Wave Theater* as a showcase both for performances by bands from the flourishing punk scene and for his self-penned antiestablishment screeds, which Ivers recited on air while dressed in outlandish garb. The show also found Ivers interacting with guest cohosts—including both Kenney and Lynch—and asking members of the bands to explain the meaning of life. Over time a host of punk acts, including Bad Religion, Circle Jerks, and Black Flag, appeared on *New Wave Theater*. "It was a madhouse," says Lynch.

The series went national when USA network picked up *New Wave Theater* and broadcast it as part of its Night Flight programming block, turning Ivers into a cult figure. While the program may have been considered "edgy" at the time, much of its format and personality would soon become familiar thanks to a new cable network. "Again, Peter Ivers was ahead of his time," says Josh Frank , author of the Ivers biography *In Heaven Everything Is Fine*. "MTV came around, and music television, punk rock, all of that became [mainstream] entertainment. *New Wave Theater* was way more important than it has ever gotten credit for." And that extends to its host—described by one Night Flight producer as a "new-wave Dick Clark"—who never achieved the recognition of the TV VJs who followed.

By the early '80s, Ivers and Fisher's relationship was breaking down, and the musician decided to relocate downtown. Saying he wanted to "get into the art community," Ivers asked Helm to help him find somewhere to live. The space the drummer found for him was large but basic. "It was not an apartment," says Helm. "These were very crude, large loft spaces previously used for industrial businesses." Fisher recalls being alarmed at her ex's new neighborhood. "Yeah, I was concerned," she says. "He wanted a bigger space where he could rehearse. But it was a scary place."

That concern would prove horribly justified. Around 2:30 p.m. on March 3, 1983, Ivers' friend Anne Ramis (Harold's then wife) became worried that Ivers had not returned her calls and asked his neighbor to check on him. It was the neighbor who found Ivers' body: fully clothed, on bloodstained sheets. Nearby was a massive wooden hammer that one of the building's other residents had left in a communal kitchen for their protection. "He's lying in bed, and there was one of those circus hammers, and there was blood on it," says Hank Petroski, one of two detectives on the case. "His head was smashed in." It would later be reported that the lock to the front door of the loft had been jimmied open, but Fisher recalls that "the door wasn't locked, which was really stupid." Either way, it wouldn't have been hard for an intruder to gain entry. "It was so easy, it was very unsecure," says the now-retired Petroski. "One of those locks, you just rattle it a few times and the door opens."

STEVEN MARTIN

> **MANY PEOPLE WERE COMING OUT OF THE WOODWORK SAYING, 'SO-AND-SO DID IT.' THERE WERE A LOT OF THEORIES FLOATING AROUND."** LUCY FISHER

Fisher was unhappy with the police investigation from the beginning. "By the time I got [to the loft], people were already milling around," she says. "They hadn't cordoned it off, which was basically 101 of what you do at a murder scene." Petroski admits that the situation was not ideal. "Oh no, it was crummy," he says. "I would have been so pissed at the patrolman, because their job is to secure [the scene]."

Petroski recalls the hammer bore no fingerprints. But the crime scene did yield one clue—missing stereo equipment. "You could see where the stereo equipment would have been," says Petroski. "There were some wires still there. So it was obvious that something was missing from the shelf. Now, that could have been a thing to fake us out—'I've already killed him for this, but now I'm going to steal his stereo equipment and then they'll think it's some burglar.'"

In the weeks that followed, Petroski questioned Ivers' friends but was unable to come up with a credible suspect. Then he learned that a burglar had fallen to his death in the area. Given the stolen stereo, Petroski theorized that the same thief might have been responsible for the killing. "But we couldn't prove it," says Petroski, "and the case eventually kind of died." Fisher, meanwhile, hired a private detective to look into the murder. "I did continue on for close to a year," she says. "After a year, I decided I wasn't going to open that door anymore, the door to that room, because the room was a bad room."

Some friends believe another figure may have played a part in Ivers' death: Jove, his *New Wave Theater* boss. While Ivers had a reputation of being merely offbeat, Jove was, to many, downright dangerous. Devo members found the producer so unnerving when they met him that the band never appeared on the show. "We were afraid of him," says Casale. "He was a scary kind of loose cannon." According to Helm, Jove—who passed away in 2004—was angry at the possibility of Ivers leaving the show. "Peter was having difficulties with David Jove and *New Wave Theater*," says the drummer. "David Jove was obsessive and quite the cocaine abuser. Peter was really kind of sick of doing David's scene. David [was] connected with some serious punkers, and some of them were violent, and David himself could be violent."

But law enforcement never seemed sold on any connection to Ivers' death. In 2006, the case was reexamined at the instigation of writer Frank, who was in the early stages of writing his Ivers biography and had contacted Cliff Shepard, the onetime downtown beat cop who was then working for the LAPD's homicide cold-case unit. "I looked at the work that had been done by the detectives at the time," says Shepard. "They came up with a suspect, who was a rooftop burglar who fell off a roof, as being the most likely suspect. I know there are a lot of people that think there's other people involved, but it doesn't appear that way. You would like to have better answers, but I don't think there ever will be. I think this is it."

PERHAPS THE SADDEST TWIST IN THE STORY OF Peter Ivers' death is that the widespread success that had always eluded the artist was closer than ever at the time he was killed. Not only was Ivers hosting a nationally broadcast TV show, but he also had recently teamed with another songwriter, Franne Golde. Their composition "Little Boy Sweet" was recorded by June Pointer (of the Pointer Sisters) and appeared a few months after Ivers' death on the soundtrack for the Ramis-directed *National Lampoon's Vacation*. And the weekend before Ivers' killing, Diana Ross recorded their song "Let's Go Up," which was released as a single later that year. "I honestly think the sky's the limit," says Fisher about what Ivers might have accomplished. "He was very entrepreneurial, and he had his finger on the pulse."

As a former vice chairman of the Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Group at Sony and current co-president of Red Wagon Entertainment, Fisher herself is now a major Hollywood player. She has also done her best to keep Ivers' name alive. Shortly after his murder, she founded the Peter Ivers Visiting Artist Program at Harvard. More recently, Fisher gave her blessing to a collection of previously unheard demos and other tracks, *Becoming Peter Ivers* (out Nov. 8). "Whenever I hear people responding to his music, it makes me happy, because it would have made him so happy," she says. "He could win over fans one at time. He just didn't have enough time." ●



↓ Ivers with longtime girlfriend and future studio executive Fisher circa 1970
Left Cover of *Becoming Peter Ivers*, a new compilation of demos by the singer, released by RVNG Intl.



TIM HUNTER

Midge (Rachel Brosnahan) greets the troops in the season 3 premiere. “I’ve never been on a stage in front of that many people before,” the actress says of this scene, which had 799 extras.



MRS. MAISEL HITS THE ROAD

SEASON 3 OF
THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL
BRINGS NEW CHARACTERS, NEW ADVENTURES, AND AN EPIC KICKOFF: A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE EMMY-WINNING AMAZON PRIME VIDEO SERIES AS MIDGE HEADS OUT ON TOUR.

By Kristen Baldwin
@KristenGBaldwin







WHAT IS THE SOUND OF 1,598 hands fake-clapping? Here on the set of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, we're about to find out. The Emmy-winning Amazon Prime Video series has taken over a hangar at the American Airpower Museum in Farmingdale, Long Island, for its season 3 opener, which finds comedian Midge Maisel (Rachel Brosnahan) performing with several other acts at a USO Christmas show. As cameras prepare to roll, *Maisel*'s first assistant director, Mariela Comitini, stands on the stage in front of 799 background actors—all suited up in Army fatigues—and instructs them on how to clap without clapping. "Touch your fingertips to your palms," she says, adding that they should not "air clap" or else eagle-eyed viewers will post snarky comments about the episode on IMDb. "Show me how you pantomime." A low, almost tactile mumble fills the space.

Finally, it's time to shoot—and not a moment too soon for the extras, who've been waiting in the hangar, chilled by a 45-degree breeze, for hours. Director (and series creator) Amy Sherman-Palladino calls "Action," and Midge and her acerbic manager, Susie (Alex Borstein), ride up to the hangar in a jeep, bickering the whole way. (Susie: "We have to work on this lateness thing." Midge: "If they call my name and I'm there, I'm not late!") Once they arrive, a soldier leads Midge inside for the talent introductions. A second soldier leads her up the stairs to the stage—"Hiya, boys!" calls Midge as she crosses—and still another officer leads her off the stage to a waiting jeep. ("My third soldier today! This is how rumors get started," she quips.) After a few attempts, Sherman-Palladino gets her (very long) shot. A crew member's voice crackles through a walkie-talkie: "Sweet tap-dancing Jesus!"

Months later, Brosnahan recalls her panic when Sherman-Palladino told her about Midge's USO performance. "I have that text exchange from her somewhere. She was like, 'Oh, by the way, there's gonna be 800 people there. Are you cool with that?' " says the actress. "No! But if that's what it has to be, I'm ready. We do like to keep biggering and bettering it."

Season 3 of *Mrs. Maisel* (out Dec. 6) is all about going big. As Midge embarks on her first national tour, opening for mega-famous singer Shy Baldwin (LeRoy McClain), she'll meet a host of new characters and discover, says Brosnahan, that "she's not the center of everyone's universe." Susie will weigh the pros and cons of taking on a major new client, Sophie Lennon (Jane Lynch), while Midge's parents, Abe (Tony Shalhoub) and Rose (Marin Hinkle), face serious life changes because Abe has decided to quit both his jobs. "That's what season 3 is about: undiscovered territory for almost all of us," says Shalhoub. "For good or for ill, everybody's moving on."

With stops in Chicago, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Miami—where *Maisel* shot on location at the famed Fontainebleau hotel—the tour will put Midge in front of her largest audiences ever. "She's having to learn how to adjust her material to different crowds, and her timing to bigger spaces," says Brosnahan. And for Susie, it means enjoying a taste of the high life—or at least the getting-paid-regularly life. "It's the first time Susie's ever been in a hotel that has a hallway," says exec producer (and husband of Sherman-Palladino) Dan Palladino. While the writers are mum on whether Susie has a

PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS PAGE: NICOLE RIVELLI/AMAZON STUDIOS (4)







← **Clockwise from left** Shy Baldwin (LeRoy McClain) performs; Alex Borstein says it's "do or die" time for Susie; Abe is on a "brand-new trajectory," says Tony Shalhoub

→ The *Maisel* production brings some 1950s glamour to a 2019 New York City street

future with Sophie Lennon, Borstein offers this hint: "Susie realizes that you can't be a one-trick pony, as a performer or as a manager. But I think she's biting off a little bit more than she can chew."

This season's new faces include longtime Sherman-Palladino player Liza Weil (*Gilmore Girls*, *Bunheads*) as...well, the creator won't reveal who she plays. "I made her go to some sort of lessons to get ready for [the role]," teases Sherman-Palladino. And *This Is Us* Emmy winner Sterling K. Brown joins the cast, albeit briefly, as "an intricate part of Shy's world," she says. Expect some lively verbal sparring between Brown's character and *Maisel*'s leading ladies. Says Borstein, "Susie definitely wants to impress this guy and not look like she doesn't know what she's doing."

Back home in New York, the men in Midge's life are grappling with their own challenges. Last year's finale featured a surprise reunion for Midge and Joel (Michael Zegen), but this season he'll turn his focus to opening a club rather than pining for his ex. "He spent last season flagellating himself, and this year we want him to start putting his life together," says Sherman-Palladino. Nor does it look like there's a wedding on the horizon for Midge and Benjamin (Zachary Levi), whose proposal she literally forgot about once Shy Baldwin asked her to join his tour. "I'm getting abused on Instagram about that," says Brosnahan with a laugh. "Anytime I post a photo that involves anyone from the show, [fans] ask why he's not in it." But Dan Palladino says Midge and Benjamin's relationship won't be totally ignored: "Whether you see the guest star again or not, the ripple effect is always there."

> "[MIDGE] DEFINITELY GROWS A LOT MORE THIS SEASON THAN SHE HAS SO FAR—YET STILL HAS A WAYS TO GO."
>
> —Rachel Brosnahan

Abe, meanwhile, is "stepping out into the void," as Shalhoub puts it, now that he plans to leave his gigs at Bell Labs and Columbia with an eye on returning to activism. "Everything he thought he knew was wrong," says the actor. "Both of his children aren't who he thought they were. That has caused him to reevaluate everything. But it's not a clear path before him—it's got twists and turns, and possibly failure at the end of the line." Rose also "has a new path to discover," adds Shalhoub.

The year is still 1959 in *Maisel* world, and with the 1960s on the horizon, Shalhoub says the show will explore "larger social issues" in season 3. Midge, for one, will realize life sometimes isn't marvelous for her celebrity benefactor, Shy Baldwin. "Even though he's a huge star and in some ways has transcended the late-1950s relationship to a black man, in a lot of ways he can't," says Brosnahan. "That's something Midge will have to wrap her head around." Sherman-Palladino's father, comedian Don Sherman, opened for black stars like Johnny Mathis and Dinah Washington, and Dan Palladino says this season will explore the "crossover" between the comedy and jazz worlds: "Jazz guys like to laugh, and comedians..." His wife interrupts: "...like to smoke pot with jazz guys."

Not that Midge is going to light up (or is she?). Regardless, the showrunners remain focused on their original *Maisel* mission: "The point of the series is that Midge blew up everybody's world when she chose to go down this road. Each year it's our responsibility to show how everybody's life has pushed into a different direction," says Sherman-Palladino. "And it should expand every year until Dan and I are dead. Then everyone's on their own." ●

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WRITTEN BY MARC SNETIKER @MARCSNETIKER × PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN FANTL

FOOD P.70 · TECH P.71 · TOYS P.72 · HOME P.73 · BEAUTY P.74

Highclere Castle Gin



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FOOD

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$49 (12-PIECE SET) × SWMSWEETS.COM



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Casamigos Cocktail Gift Set

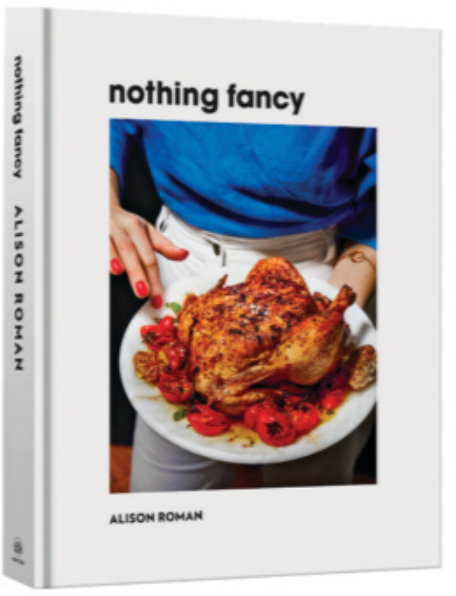
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Nothing Fancy by Alison Roman

Influencer chef Roman (inventor of the Insta-famous treat known simply as "The Cookies") drops a compulsory cookbook dedicated to the art of entertaining, which, turns out, is more than just throwing a chunk of Gouda on a plank.

$33 × PENGUIN RANDOMHOUSE.COM



PROP STYLING: ANNE LATINI AND ALISON WILD

TECH

BECAUSE DIGITAL IS IN YOUR DNA



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$80
SEGA.COM

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Pokémon Sword & Pokémon Shield on Nintendo Switch

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NINTENDO.COM





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Fujifilm Instax Mini LiPlay

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The age 16+ label is no joke for this grown-up DIY model, which manages to put more care and detail into the Mother of Dragons than *Game of Thrones*' entire final season.

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LEGO *Stranger Things*: The Upside Down

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$35 (VILLAINOUS), $25 (WICKED TO THE CORE; EVIL COMES PREPARED) TARGET.COM

TOYS

BECAUSE THINGS HAVE EVOLVED SINCE TICKLE ME ELMO

HOME

BECAUSE THERE'S LIFE BEYOND BED AND BATH



Pottery Barn *Friends* Peephole Frame

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POTTERYBARN.COM



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XMAS S.O.S. When in doubt, remember that no human in history can refuse the moisturizing allure of a stocking stuffed with Sephora face masks (sephora.com).

The Big Box of Lippie Stix

ColourPop's impressive stash of 48 shades (including Daydream, Poison, and a crème dusty coral known as Topanga—hello, *Boy Meets World*!) stands to make any lipstick lover's day, 48 separate times.

$115 × COLOURPOP.COM



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BEAUTY

BECAUSE "RED-CARPET READY" AND "SELF-CARE SUNDAY" ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE



Urban Decay Naked Honey Eyeshadow Palette

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ADDITIONAL BEAUTY REPORTING BY ROSY CORDERO

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The Most Important Takes of the Month

Reviews

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BOOKS

The X FACTOR

They'd been Marvel's ugly ducklings for years, but the **X-MEN** are once again the most exciting, groundbreaking superheroes in comics. EW's CHRISTIAN HOLUB explains why.

House of X & Powers of X

WRITER
Jonathan Hickman

ARTISTS
Pepe Larraz, R.B. Silva

PUBLISHER
Marvel

THE X-MEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN avatars of change. When they were created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1963, they broke from previous Marvel superheroes by gaining their powers from genetics rather than freak accidents. They represented the next stage of human evolution.

When writer Chris Claremont and artists like John Byrne and Dave Cockrum took over, the X-Men transformed again—from lily-white WASPs to a colorful cavalcade of mutants from across the world. In the '90s, they developed into the big-muscled, gunslinging heroes typical of that era. As the 2000s dawned, the X-Men heralded a new superhero century, from Bryan Singer's movies to Grant Morrison's comics. Then the X-Men stopped evolving. Their movies paled beside the world-conquering blockbusters of the Marvel Cinematic Universe; their comics relied on time-hopping gimmicks.

Enter Jonathan Hickman and his mutant revolution. In an age of superhero glut, Hickman has distinguished himself with structural innovation. He'd received popular acclaim for his runs on *Avengers* and *Fantastic Four*, but the X-Men always had his heart; they're the only superheroes he's truly loved since childhood. He was finally given the reins to Marvel's mutants earlier this year, and produced a story combining that lifelong passion with the most finely honed storytelling of his career, capable of both introducing new readers to the unbridled joy of superhero comics and reminding old fans why they first fell in love with these characters.

This X-Men story, told across 12 weeks this summer, is split into two interwoven comic miniseries: *House of X* and *Powers of X*, illustrated by Pepe Larraz and R.B. Silva. It might sound like needless complication—born out of the fact that no human artist could illustrate a weekly comic for three straight months—but the two



halves feed into each other. The *House of X* half marks a new beginning for Marvel's mutants. Setting aside their differences with old enemies like Magneto, Professor Charles Xavier and his X-Men stun the rest of the world by declaring a new sovereign mutant nation-state on the sentient island of Krakoa. *Powers of X,* meanwhile, jumps around in time to show both the necessity of that decision (the dystopian futures awaiting if mutants continue fighting among themselves) and the possible ramifications (unity taken to its extreme).

FURTHER READING
Check out *Legion of Super-Heroes* for more of the best in comics right now

The connective tissue between them is Moira MacTaggert, a longtime X-Men ally (portrayed by Rose Byrne in the most recent films). Hickman invests her with new importance: Anytime she dies, the world resets to the time of her birth—the only difference being that she can perfectly recall the events of her past lives. Thus, she knows it's time for change. At her urging, Xavier sets aside his dream of peaceful coexistence with humans and starts making demands to secure mutants' future.

The parameters of this new world are defined not just by Larraz's and Silva's dynamic art, but also by infographic "data pages" from Hickman and designer Tom Muller, taking readers behind the scenes of everything from the different properties of Krakoa's flowers to the timelines of Moira's many lives. It's not just the X-Men who are changing, it's the very structure of their comics.

This new take on old characters cuts through the mass of overabundant pop culture. As new issues came out each week, fans congregated on social media to share theories and insights. The excitement of unraveling those mysteries is still intact for anyone reading them in collected form. After all, one reason *House of X* and *Powers of X* resonated this year goes beyond a weekly comic club: Mutants are standing up and refusing to be taken advantage of at the same time that people across the world are doing the same.

In one of Moira's lives, a mutant supervillain asks her: "Do you have any idea how much they hate us?" Knowledge of that hate can destroy a people's spirit—or lead to unprecedented solidarity. And that can inaugurate the biggest changes of all. Welcome to the age of Krakoa.

(PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS PAGE) *POWERS OF X*: R.B. SILVA/MARVEL (2)

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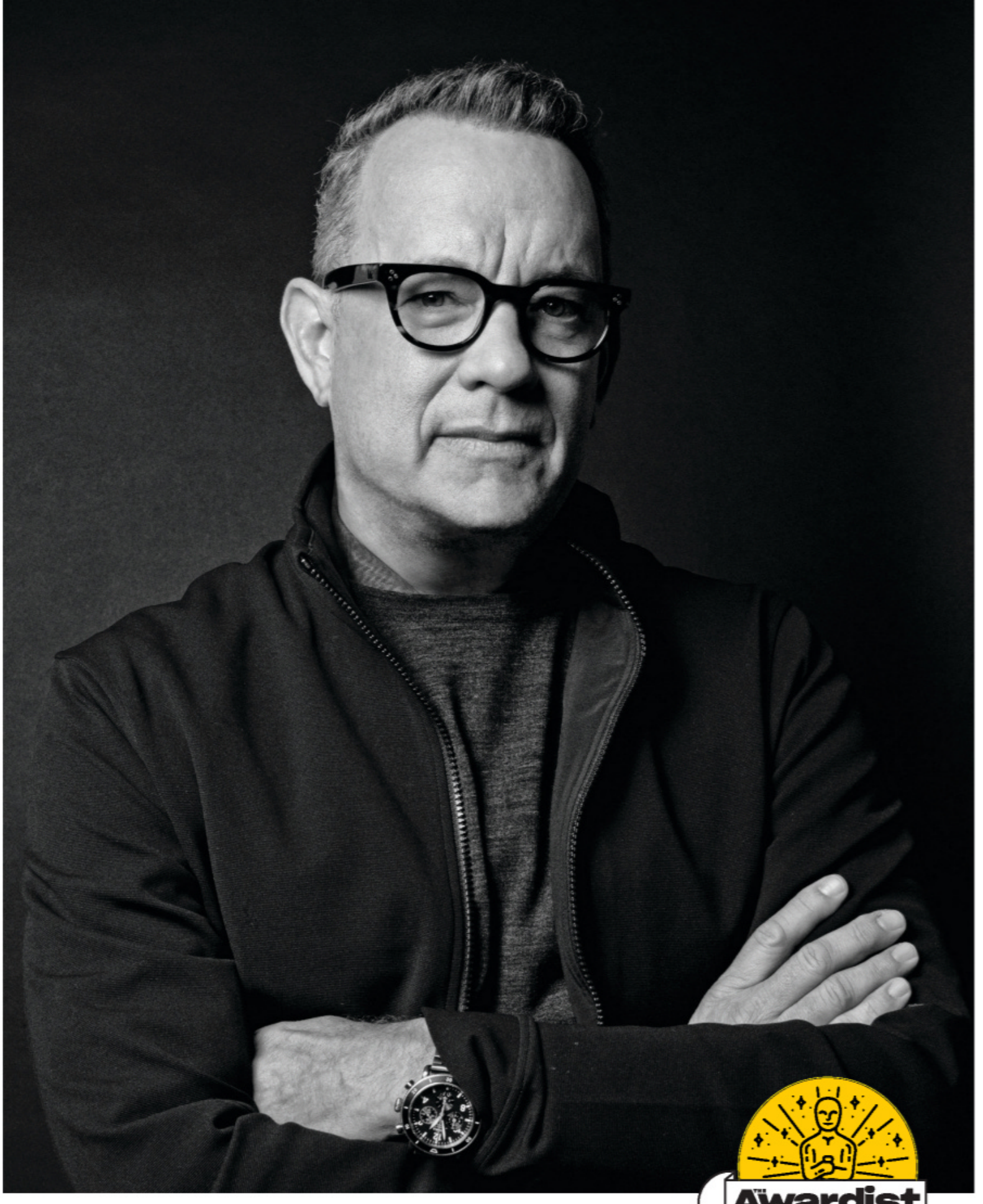


LOVE WILL FIND ITS TRUTH

On October 13, EW partnered with Prime Video to host an advance screening of the new Amazon Original *Modern Love*. The event featured a Q&A and cocktail reception at Amazon's pop-up Museum of Modern Love.

Watch now!
amazon.com/modernlove

prime video



THE AWARDIST INTERVIEW

TOM HANKS

The Oscar winner is back in the race with his soulful turn as Mr. Rogers in ***A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD*** (out Nov. 22). BY DAVID CANFIELD

TOM HANKS AS FRED ROGERS—CAN you imagine a more perfect match? Ever since it was announced in January 2018 that the two-time Oscar winner would play the role of the late children's entertainer, the sentiment hasn't let up. If anything, reception out of *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*'s September premiere in Toronto only fanned the flames—and Hanks,

EDITED BY → LYNETTE RICE @LYNETTERICE

perhaps a bit uneasily, is well aware that fans' excitement is rooted in his amiable cultural image. "I come off as a guy who lives across the street, who ends up being in some big-ass struggle for his life," Hanks, 63, says. "Am I perfect for playing a guy like Mr. Rogers? Well, I'm a professional. I'll go at it full tilt. But does that mean I'm also the only guy who can play Captain Kangaroo?"

And yet Hanks—always an empathic, patient, warm onscreen presence—does appear singularly suited to take on the part, at least in director Marielle Heller's vision. *Beautiful Day* keeps Rogers secondary to protagonist Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys), a cynical journalist assigned to write a fawning profile on him. Lloyd makes it his mission to bring the icon down to size, asking tough questions about celebrity and trauma. Rogers is left (mostly) unfazed; Hanks imbues him with an unexpected complexity, but still keys in to his ministerial nature. Like many a Hanks character, Rogers emerges heroically: believably, movingly, uniquely so.

So, yes, Fred Rogers sort of fits Tom Hanks like a glove. "I've babysat [many] kids by way of some [of my] movies," Hanks concedes. "I've been to some degree both a challenging menu and sometimes a comfort food to an awful lot of people out there."

Mr. Rogers feels like a milestone in many ways for Hanks. He's spent decades bringing real legends like Walt Disney and Charlie Wilson to life; he's earned the moniker of "America's Dad" by killing audiences with kindness. Upon its Toronto launch, *Beautiful Day* staked a firm place in this season's awards conversation, and Hanks is a frontrunner in the Best Supporting Actor race. It'd be his first Oscar nomination in nearly 20 years.

The script for *Beautiful Day* (by Micah Fitzerman-Blue and Noah Harpster) has been around for a while. Hanks read it—and passed—several years ago; it came back into his orbit with Heller (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*) attached. "It was a completely different movie in her hands than it was when I first read it," Hanks says. "The first time you read something like that, all you're reading is a blank canvas. There's nobody to guide you...to what the movie actually *means*. Mari...was a spiritual force behind the movie."

The two engaged in deep conversations over how exactly to portray Rogers. Hanks watched the acclaimed documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* in addition to "hours and hours" of interviews. He streamed every episode of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* that he possibly could. But he did not dramatically alter his appearance. "Mari stated very clearly, 'We are not going to do a physical re-creation of him. We are going to do a spiritual lamination on who the man is,'" Hanks says. Aside from a wig and eyebrow work, he was left to capture Rogers on his own. "On one hand, it liberates you—you're not locked into photographs or measurements," he says. "But I don't get to hide inside a neck that is glued to the top of my shoulders."

The film's team shot on location in Pittsburgh and re-created the set of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* at the very studio where the show was made. The production was further surrounded by people who knew Rogers, including his widow, Joanne. "It was like shooting in Vatican City," Hanks says. "You're walking into a place that is nearly holy ground." He got in touch with the soul of Mr. Rogers not by walking around with a "fake forehead" but by living in his world. "You'll find it in the blue sneakers," as he puts it, "more than you're going to find it in the prosthetic nose."



↓ Tom Hanks as Fred Rogers, welcoming audiences to the neighborhood

(OPPOSITE PAGE) RYAN PFLÜGER/AUGUST; (THIS PAGE) *A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD*: LACEY TERRELL/SONY; *THE TWO POPES*: PETER MOUNTAIN/NETFLIX

→ Top of the *Popes*: Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce



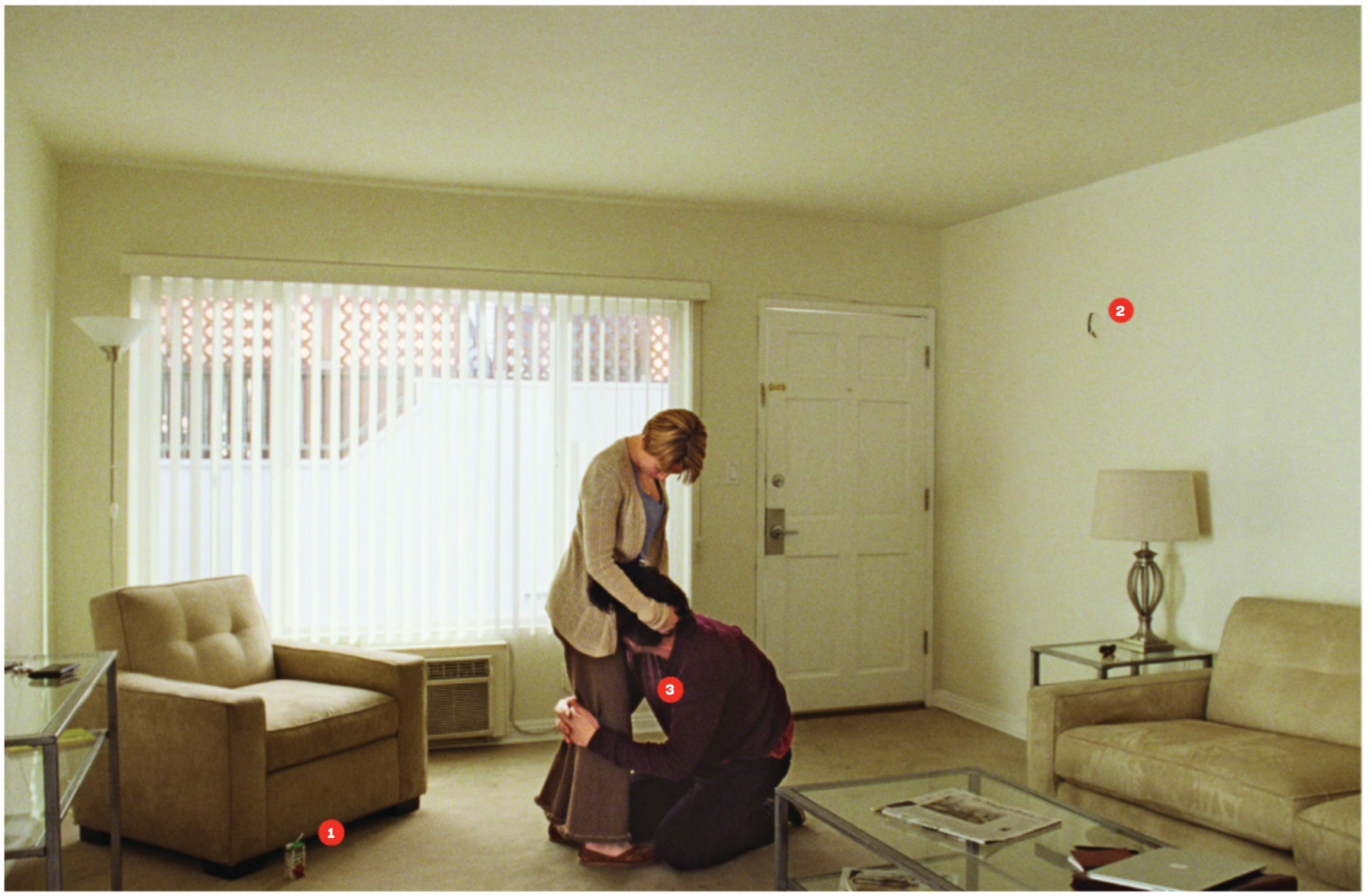
The Two Popes

STARRING	Anthony Hopkins, Jonathan Pryce
DIRECTED BY	Fernando Meirelles
RATING + TIME	PG-13, 2 hrs., 6 mins.
REVIEW BY	Leah Greenblatt @Leahbats

THE NARRATIVE TENSION AT THE center of Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles' holy drama is right there in the title: How can *Popes* be plural?

It's 2005, and the death of John Paul II opens the door for a not-unexpected successor, the German cardinal who becomes Benedict XVI (Anthony Hopkins). But there are more than a few votes, too, for Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Jonathan Pryce), a humble, ABBA-loving Argentinean with far less codified views. Seven years later, Benedict is ailing, and under the strain of an increasingly scandal-plagued Church, he summons his onetime rival to the Vatican, where the future Pope Francis hopes to plea for early retirement. Benedict, of course, has other ideas.

As these vastly different men parry, spar, and circle each other, Meirelles' intimately talky two-hander—not counting, if you wish, a third invisible hand upstairs—works with wit and quiet humor to demystify perhaps the most powerful, insular post in the world. That he has two such fine actors—by turns spiky, shrewd, and transcendent—to do it lifts *Popes* above its loose patchwork of monologue, flashback, and personal reckoning, and lets the movie get down to its truest root: making them human. **B+**



MAKING THE SCENE

Marriage Story

FROM HIS HEARTBREAKING CHRONICLE OF A UNION UNRAVELING (ON NETFLIX DEC. 6), WRITER-DIRECTOR **NOAH BAUMBACH** CASTS A SOBERING LIGHT ON THE MOVIE'S CLIMACTIC CLASH. *BY MARY SOLLOSI*

FOR A FILM CALLED *MARRIAGE STORY*, the main players rarely communicate. Throughout Noah Baumbach's affecting portrait of a divorce, Charlie (Adam Driver) and Nicole (Scarlett Johansson) filter themselves in front of their son or let their lawyers do the talking—until an explosive fight scene breaks the grievous silence. "They've lost their voices," the filmmaker says. "They need to find their voices again, and the fight provides that." Filmed over two days, the painstakingly choreographed sequence plays out like a relentless duet—but ultimately offers relief. "It was the most difficult scene I've ever shot," Baumbach says. "But also the most rewarding."

1. Pleasantries

Baumbach calls Charlie's solo apartment one of the film's "transitional spaces" on the couple's journey to new lives. Upon arrival, Nicole acknowledges the bare walls and accepts a refreshment—a juice box—that lingers on the floor. "The presence of the juice box makes me sad," admits Baumbach. "It's recent history. It's still a moment where things maybe could be salvaged. It all happened so quickly, [crossing] this line from civil conversation to an all-out fight."

2. Fury

At first, Charlie finds little tasks to avoid the conflict. "He's afraid of what will happen if he really commits to the conversation," Baumbach says. But once he does, it packs a punch—first in the brutality of the exchange, which displays their expert knowledge of how to hurt each other, and then in Charlie's actual decision to punch a wall. "They don't know where to put all of this pain, so they put it into this language, these physical gestures," says Baumbach.

3. Catharsis

Throughout the film, "she's in the process of building herself up, and he's in the process of breaking himself down," Baumbach explains. When Charlie finally drops to his knees, sobbing and sorry, it's a turning point for him and a tender moment for the pair. "Even in this scene, which maybe is the most contentious things become, you still feel that intimacy," the filmmaker says. "I always felt, throughout the whole movie, that love exists in every scene."

NETFLIX

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Uncut Gems

STARRING	Adam Sandler, Kevin Garnett, Julia Fox
DIRECTED BY	Josh Safdie and Benny Safdie
RATING + TIME	R 2 hrs., 14 mins.
REVIEW BY	Darren Franich @DarrenFranich

ADAM SANDLER WORKS and works, making one movie a year when he isn't making three. Quantity sure isn't quality, though the diamonds sparkle. Take *Uncut Gems*, a vibrantly madcap dark comedy. As jeweler Howard Ratner, Sandler rocks shiny earrings and shinier glasses, plus gleaming teeth and circular facial hair. He looks like a midlife crisis, and the overkill extends to his constant salesman chatter.

Howard owes money all over New York. At least one debt could turn fatal. Salvation rests in an Ethiopian opal, which arrives in his Diamond District shop the same moment as the NBA's Kevin Garnett (charmingly playing himself). Howard thinks he can score big off the rock and the baller, but the spiraling story line carries him from bad to worse. His wife (Idina Menzel) wants him out. To cover all the losses he can't afford, he keeps betting cash he doesn't have. The first time we see Howard, he's mid-colonoscopy. That's as comfortable as he'll ever get.

The directors are Josh and Benny Safdie, the thrilling filmmakers behind 2017's insidiously fun *Good Time*. *Uncut Gems* is so playfully overstuffed that ace cast members like Menzel and LaKeith Stanfield don't have enough to do.

Howard is a Sandlerian type: raging, crying, punching a celebrity. But Sandler is revelatory in the role. He's never been better, really, balancing speedwalking desperation and fast-talking salesmanship with sorrow and glee. What's the word for a performance that's loud and meaningful, hyperbolic yet terribly human? That's Sandler in *Uncut Gems*: He's opera, man. **A–**

↓ Idina Menzel and Adam Sandler play a couple whose marriage is on the rocks





↑ Lynne Griffin gives a lifeless performance in 1974's *Black Christmas*

Christmas Gory

FORTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE OF HORROR MOVIE ***BLACK CHRISTMAS***, A REMAKE SLASHES ITS WAY INTO CINEMAS DEC. 13. THE CAST OF THE ORIGINAL FILM EXPLAIN HOW THE BOX OFFICE DUD BECAME A CULT CLASSIC. *BY CLARK COLLIS*

HOW ABOUT THIS FOR A MOVIE plot? A group of young people are picked off by a psycho whose face is never really seen and who escapes justice at the end. Yes, that's what happens in John Carpenter's 1978 hit *Halloween*, widely regarded as the granddaddy of slasher films. But it's also the plot of the more obscure, Canada-shot terror tale *Black Christmas*, which was released four years earlier. Now the movie is getting recognition as both a genre classic and an inspirational text. "Many filmmakers were influenced by *Black Christmas*," says cast member Lynne Griffin.

Directed by Bob Clark (*A Christmas Story*), the film stars Griffin, Olivia Hussey, Margot Kidder, and Andrea Martin as sorority sisters menaced by a maniac. It was originally, and unsuccessfully, released in the U.S. as *Silent Night, Evil Night*. "The Americans changed the title because they thought everybody would think it's about a black family celebrating Christmas," says actor Art Hindle, who played the boyfriend of Griffin's character.

Michelle Trachtenberg starred in a 2006 reboot, and a new version, with Imogen Poots, is being released Dec. 13. "I was a huge fan of the original, but the plot of this is extremely different," says director Sophia Takal. "It's more inspired by what *Black Christmas* made me feel, this idea of misogyny always being out there."

PHOTOFEST

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ROLE CALL

TONI COLLETTE



→ The Sydney-born chameleon, 47, reflects on her most memorable roles, from would-be Dancing Queen to true detective—and now a dippy bohemian in the all-star whodunit ***KNIVES OUT*** (out Nov. 27). BY LEAH GREENBLATT

1. Muriel's Wedding 1994

The Aussie comedy about an ABBA-obsessed outcast who dreams of matrimony made a sudden star of Toni Collette, then just 21, eventually earning her a Golden Globe nod. "It was massively life-changing," she says. "I was very much a baby, very clueless.... Then I found myself on a red carpet shaking hands with Mel Gibson, saying hi to Brad Pitt and John Travolta." And when her category was called? "I was in the loo," she says with a laugh.

2. Velvet Goldmine 1998

"Oh God, I was so determined to get that part," Collette says of her role in Todd Haynes' heady glam-rock fantasia alongside Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Ewan McGregor, and Christian Bale. "It was quite hedonistic, and really fun. I love all of those guys. I'd love to sit in a room with them now and catch up."

3. The Sixth Sense 1999

"I got the script at the same time that I was sent a project from Martin Scorsese, so I hadn't heard of [writer-director M. Night Shyamalan] and I had *really* heard a lot about that Scorsese guy," she remembers. "But it totally blew me away. I thought it was the most beautiful, unexpected, spiritual story."

4. About a Boy 2002

As the hapless Fiona, Collette played loopy-hippie foil to Hugh Grant's reluctant cool-guy mentor, and mother to then-pubescent Nicholas Hoult. "I'm so proud of that gorgeous, beautiful boy," she says of the *X-Men* and *Mad Max: Fury Road* star, now 30. "I saw him recently and met the mother of his child, and it just blows my mind. Time is so elastic and so strange."

5. In Her Shoes 2005

She remains close in real life with Cameron Diaz, her wayward screen sister in Curtis Hanson's fraught family drama—and recalls "little chats" between takes with a certain flame-haired Hollywood icon who appeared as their long-lost grandmother. "I still cannot believe to this day that I got to work with Shirley f---ing MacLaine," Collette marvels. "I mean, she's a legend."

6. Little Miss Sunshine 2006

A surprise indie smash that went on to earn two Oscars and $100 million at the box office, this humble road-trip dramedy costarring Alan Arkin and Steve Carell found Collette once again parenting a small oddball—in this case, an unlikely pageant-queen aspirant named Olive, played by "the delicious" Abigail Breslin. "I'm not ageist," she says of her approach to working with kids on screen. "They're just there and willing and open, and they want to do the bloody best that they can, like all actors should."











COLLETTE: DIA DIPASUPIL/GETTY IMAGES; *KNIVES OUT*: CLAIRE FOLGER/LIONSGATE (2); *LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE*: ERIC LEE/FOX SEARCHLIGHT; *MURIEL'S WEDDING*: EVERETT COLLECTION; *THE AERONAUTS*: AMAZON STUDIOS; *WAVES*: A24

7. United States of Tara 2009–11

The Showtime dramedy about a Kansas housewife with dissociative identity disorder set Collette free to portray everything from a gum-snapping teenager to a Vietnam vet—and won her both an Emmy and a Globe. But don't ask her which personality she liked best: "Oh, I loved them all! I was devastated, so sad when it ended.... It really was the best job I've ever had."

8. Hereditary 2018

Another young, unproven director with a brilliant stand-alone concept, and another home run for the actress. Writer-director Ari Aster's familial horror story became an art-house hit, as did his next film—not that she would know firsthand. "I can't watch scary movies, so I didn't see *Midsommar*," she admits of this past summer's eerie Sweden-set thriller. "But he walked me through the whole thing! So I get it."

9. Unbelievable 2019

The fact-based Netflix procedural paired her with Merritt Wever as detectives investigating a series of cold-case sexual assaults. "When a victim is suddenly spun into a suspect it's horrific, and I think that's why so many people have responded to this show," she says. "The details are not sensationalized. It's representative of a very common reality that needs to be looked at, and it needs to be amended."

10. Knives Out 2019

Rian Johnson's starry mystery, a sort of modern-day *Clue* whose roster includes Chris Evans, Daniel Craig, and Jamie Lee Curtis, gives Collette the chance to play a Goop-esque lifestyle blogger with a swirl of essential oils where her brain should be. "She's simply not very smart," Collette jokes. "She aligns herself with her intentions, which are quite good, just not real. It's like clinging to smoke." And the cast? "Bonkers! So intimidatingly talented, and all lovely, lovely people. I'm glad the trailers were too far to scurry back to—it forced us together, and that's what made it so special."

→ Clockwise from top Daniel Craig, LaKeith Stanfield, and Noah Segan go *Knives Out* for murder; Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones aim high in *The Aeronauts*; Kelvin Harrison Jr. and Sterling K. Brown make *Waves*



Knives Out

STARRING
Chris Evans, Daniel Craig

RATING + TIME
PG-13, 2 hrs., 10 mins.

A SILLY, STABBY, supremely clever whodunit, *Knives* really only suffers from having too little room for each of its talented players. Christopher Plummer is the patriarch whose 85th birthday party becomes a crime scene; as his offspring and assorted in-laws (Chris Evans, Jamie Lee Curtis, Don Johnson, Michael Shannon, and Toni Collette among them) squabble and dodge, Daniel Craig's drawling detective patiently stakes his case—and writer-director Rian Johnson (*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*) lovingly tweaks the tropes of classic murder mysteries, blowing the dust off with timely cracks about *Hamilton*, *Game of Thrones,* and dark-web incels. **B+** —*LG*

The Aeronauts

STARRING
Felicity Jones

RATING + TIME
PG-13, 1 hr., 41 mins.

IS IT *GRAVITY* FOR 19th-century steampunks, or a petticoat romance at 35,000 feet? *Aeronauts* never seems entirely sure what kind of movie it wants to be, even as it reunites *The Theory of Everything* costars Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones in an adventure drama whose tone is prone to shift with every crosswind. As does the hot-air balloon their two characters have been thrown together in—he hoping to legitimize the still-nascent science of weather prediction, she to overcome a terrible personal tragedy. It's only a small spoiler to say that the story soon belongs to Jones, who essentially becomes her own action hero in this whimsical, oddly airless curiosity. **B–** —*LG*

Waves

STARRING
Kelvin Harrison Jr.

RATING + TIME
R, 2 hrs., 15 mins.

"WE'RE NOT AFFORDED the luxury of being average," Ronald (Sterling K. Brown) admonishes his teenage son Tyler (Kelvin Harrison Jr.) early on in Trey Edward Shults' deeply felt domestic drama. And indeed, the family lives every day—church, work, sports, school—as a model of upward mobility and black excellence. But Tyler's private world is coming apart, and as his psyche splits, so does the film; it's really two movies, with the much quieter second half centered on his sister (a luminous Taylor Russell). Shults (*It Comes at Night*) frontloads his story with so much feverish plotting and kinetic camerawork that style threatens to subsume it. In the end, though, substance wins. **B+** —*LG*

THE SHOT

Avatar

INSIDE THE CREATION OF A CLASSIC SCENE

→ While director James Cameron's sci-fi epic is full of action, it's the quiet, provocative shot of Neytiri (Zoe Saldana) drinking water from a leaf that won 2010's Best Single Visual Effect at the VES Awards. "Going in, it's not the kind of shot that you'd think will stand out," admits Joe Letteri, *Avatar*'s senior visual-effects supervisor. "We realized that it caught the spirit of the film—showing how these characters understand and live within their environment." But before they were stuck on a soundstage for filming, Cameron, Saldana, and Sam Worthington went to Hawaii to get the feel of a Pandora-like forest. Recalls Letteri: "This shot was something that Jim staged with Zoe in Hawaii, finding a big leaf and having her drink out of it, so that she'd really have that in her head." There was no actual leaf when it came time to film; Saldana was in a motion-capture suit as someone poured water directly into her mouth. Letteri says the biggest challenge was perfecting the natural flow from a CG plant to a CG figure, especially since nailing such a small, human act was crucial in selling this world. "Everyone understands drinking," explains Letteri. "So if we make those moments feel as real as possible, then you have a character that audiences will follow." —*Derek Lawrence*



WETA





GOING *MAD*

Twenty years after saying goodbye to their hit sitcom, Helen Hunt and Paul Reiser are back together for new episodes of ***MAD ABOUT YOU*** on Spectrum Originals.

BY SARAH RODMAN

PAUL REISER AND HELEN HUNT were occasionally asked about the possible return of their comedy *Mad About You*. But it wasn't necessarily their characters—New Yorkers Paul and Jamie Buchman—about whom fans were most curious. "People always ask about Murray," Reiser says in his classic mock-frustration style of the couple's lovable mutt. "They don't ask about me, they don't ask about Helen. 'What happened to the dog?' And then they're surprised that 27 years later, the good Lord took him." But sometimes when the Lord taketh away, He also giveth. Twenty years after its seven-season run decorated by



12 Emmys, *Mad* is back with a new season on Spectrum Originals; six episodes are available now, and additional episodes will launch Dec. 18.

The Buchmans, who began the series as lovably mismatched newlyweds, are now facing an empty nest since daughter Mabel (Abby Quinn) is heading to college all the way...at NYU. (Yes, everyone involved is simply ignoring that downbeat original series finale.)

"It took us a while to get to 'yes' for ourselves, for creative reasons," says Reiser, sitting next to Hunt on the meticulously re-created, but fully updated, Buchman living-room set. "The first thought really was that it would be fun to play together. And then the second was 'Well, why? What story would you tell?' "

Hunt says that during the original run—all 164 episodes of which were made available on demand on Spectrum prior to the new series launch—"I used to get very anxious in the summer [hiatus] about 'Oh God, 22 stories that we have to think of, and shepherd the writing through.' And then, once we would have a theme of the season, I would relax and think, 'We'll get great stories. I know we will.' Similarly, there just didn't seem like a good reason to do it until we did the math that this would be the empty-nest moment. Then I thought, 'Oh, we're going to find 12 stories easily.' "

As people who have worked together and been friends for more than 25 years (they kept in close touch), the actors retain an easy rapport, finishing each other's sentences and gently encouraging the other to speak and tell stories. That connection helped them ease back into familiar roles that required a fresh perspective.

"The first read-through, we had a little private table read with the cast—that was a trip," says Hunt, who, along with Reiser, was thrilled to bring original series characters like Paul's cousin Ira (John Pankow), buddy Mark (Richard Kind), and Jamie's sister Lisa (Anne Ramsay) back to the playpen. Carol Burnett also returns as Jamie and Lisa's mom. "The biggest part of the trip was how readily we did fall into place," says Reiser. "And then, when we came on the set, that really locked it and we just thought, 'Oh yes.' I think what blew us all away was the thought that this should be harder. I mean, it's not easy to do, but it's coming back to us so readily. It is totally a comfortable pair of shoes."

Paradoxically, part of what made the revival so appealing to the actors—who serve as very-hands-on executive producers alongside veteran showrunner Peter Tolan—is that they didn't *need* to do it. Both had robust careers pre-*Mad*, and their résumés only got richer and more diverse after the show ended.

← Jamie (Helen Hunt) and Paul Buchman (Paul Reiser) 2.0

Hunt, 56, continued acting and dove headfirst into directing feature films and episodic television (recently, Netflix's *The Politician* and NBC's *This Is Us*). The four-time Emmy winner for *Mad* also scooped up an Oscar during the show's run for 1997's *As Good as It Gets* and was nominated for a second for 2012's *The Sessions*.

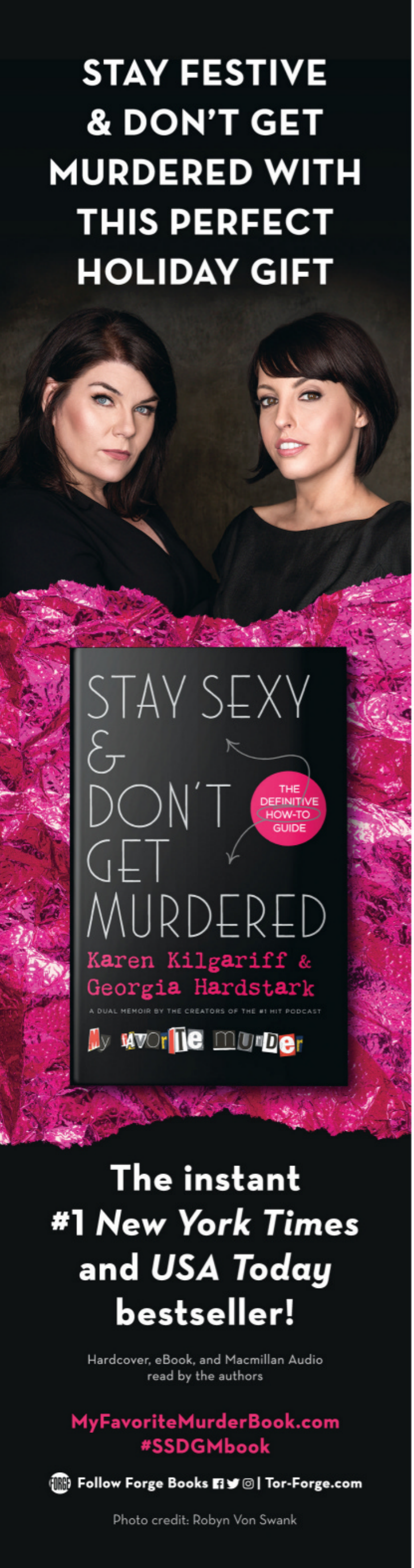
The road recently beckoned stand-up Reiser, 63, who also authored several books and has made something of a cottage industry of working with all the big streaming services, including Netflix (*Stranger Things* and *The Kominsky Method*) and Amazon Prime Video (*Red Oaks*).

"We never take it for granted," Reiser says of their career good fortune. "But this was not, by any stretch, a career move. This is not part of any plan. This was literally us sitting at lunch going, 'Would we want to?' I've given up trying to predict stuff. Would we do more? I don't know. Let's see where we're standing at the end of 12."

↓ Paul and Jamie Buchman, original flavor



MAD ABOUT YOU: TRAE PATTON/SONY PICTURES TELEVISION



YuleTube

Santa is stuffing 100-plus new Christmas flicks into your stocking! As you sift through the heap of happy endings, allow us to slide down the chimney and highlight a few notable trends in our annual **HOLIDAY TV-MOVIE SURVIVAL GUIDE**.

BY DAN SNIERSON

GLOBAL AND NOBLE

Vermont remains a holiday hot spot (four movies and counting!), but be overjoyed to go overseas. There's a *Christmas in Rome* (Hallmark, Nov. 30), a *Christmas in Paris* (UPtv, Dec. 8), a Vienna adventure in *Best Christmas Ball Ever!* (ION Television, Dec. 14), and the fictional locales of San Savarre in *Christmas With a Prince: Becoming Royal* (UPtv, Nov. 23) and Aldovia in *A Christmas Prince: The Royal Baby* (Netflix, Dec. 5). The animated *Klaus* (Netflix*) takes place in Scandinavia and the Arctic, yet the world's most surprising yuletide film—*Holiday in the Wild* (Netflix)—boasts Rob Lowe, Kristin Davis, the country of Zambia, and a rescued baby elephant.

BATTLE OF THE COMPETITION MOVIES

Bets and scores will be settled over the holidays. The most common contest? Cooking. See: *A Sweet Christmas Romance* (Lifetime), *Christmas a la Mode* (Lifetime), *Christmas Cupcakes* (UPtv, Nov. 23), *A Christmas Recipe for Romance* (UPtv, Nov. 24), and *Baking Christmas* (OWN, Nov 29). In *Dear Santa, I Need a Date* (TV One, Dec. 8), siblings vie to land a significant other, and *A Nasty Piece of Work* (Hulu, Dec. 6) truly blackens the holiday spirit when a boss invites an ambitious underling to face his rival in a "violent competition."

HELLO, HANUKKAH!

For those who light the menorah, finally there's a latke to love. *Holiday Date* (Hallmark, Dec. 14) centers on a woman who hires a Jewish actor to pose as her Christmas-loving beau who dumped her. *Double Holiday* (Hallmark, Dec. 22) features a Jewish project manager who plans an office Christmas party. And in *Mistletoe & Menorahs* (Lifetime, Dec. 7), a toy-company exec needs a crash course in Hanukkah so she can land a big account. (Wait till she learns there are a half-dozen ways to spell it.)

SNOW WAY OUT

The ageless "stranded by snowstorm!" trope blows stronger than usual. The blizzard of options includes *Snowbound for Christmas* (UPtv, Dec. 15), *Let It Snow* (Netflix), *The Road Home for Christmas*





*MOVIES WITHOUT PREMIERE DATES ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE HOLIDAY CHEER

(Lifetime), *Twinkle All the Way* (Lifetime, Nov. 23), *A Christmas Duet* (Hallmark, Nov. 25), and *Grounded for Christmas* (Lifetime, Dec. 8). *Christmas Wedding Runaway* (UPtv, Dec. 22) even traps a bride with her ex and grandmother in a cabin. But only *Sweet Mountain Christmas* (Lifetime) sets a country star adrift before letting her find true love with...*come on, you got this!*...a snowplow driver!

SIS THE SEASON

Sisterly love sleighs: Female siblings play a role—or two—in *No Time Like Christmas* (Lifetime), *A Christmas Wish* (Lifetime, Nov. 28), *Rediscovering Christmas* (Lifetime, Dec. 15), *Sense, Sensibility & Snowmen* (Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, Nov. 30), and *A Blue Ridge Mountain Christmas* (HMM, Nov. 30), in which Rachael Leigh Cook plays a hotel manager helping her sis plan a wedding. Wanna go full meta? In *A Christmas Movie Christmas* (UPtv, Nov. 24), a Christmas-movie superfan and her jaded sister wake up inside their own yuletide flick. (Maybe they'll meet rival widowed dads who are trying to save the town's ice-skating rink?)



HOLIDAY IN THE WILD: ILZE KITSCHOFF/NETFLIX; HOLIDAY DATE: HALLMARK; SNOWBOUND FOR CHRISTMAS; CHRISTMAS MOVIE CHRISTMAS; CHRISTMAS RECIPE FOR ROMANCE UPTV(3); SERVANT: JESSICA KOURKOUNIS/APPLE

← **Clockwise from top left** *Holiday in the Wild*, *A Sweet Christmas Romance*, *Snowbound for Christmas*, *A Christmas Movie Christmas*, and *Holiday Date*

→ Nell Tiger Free (a.k.a. *Game of Thrones*' Myrcella Baratheon) rocks the cradle on *Servant*



Servant

DATE	Launches Nov. 28
NETWORK + TIME	Apple TV+ Streaming
REVIEW BY	Kristen Baldwin @KristenGBaldwin

WE LEARN FROM A YOUNG AGE that strangers are scary. That fear never really leaves us, which is probably why there are so many horror movies about home invasions, from the violent (*You're Next*) to the slow-burn disaster (*Single White Female*). On *Servant*—a bracing psychological thriller from M. Night Shyamalan and Tony Basgallop—the unknown comes in the form of a peculiar young nanny, but the home she's invading is not without its own awful secrets.

One rainy night, Leanne Grayson (*Game of Thrones*' Nell Tiger Free) arrives, suitcase in hand, at the Philadelphia town house owned by Dorothy (Lauren Ambrose) and Sean Turner (Toby Kebbell). She's been hired as a nanny for the Turners' baby, Jericho, but—and this is not revealing anything that Apple hasn't already made public—Jericho is dead, so instead Leanne will be caring for a lifelike doll. "Transitory object therapy, or so her unlicensed quack likes to call it," Sean tells Leanne of his wife's treatment.

But Leanne, who prays every night and adorns Jericho's nursery with a homemade wooden cross, is unfazed. While Dorothy is off at work as an on-air correspondent, Leanne changes the doll's diapers and takes it for walks, as Sean watches with confusion and concern. By the end of the 30-minute premiere, a perfectly executed twist turns Sean's worry to paralyzing shock—and suddenly he is scrambling to maintain a hold on his own reality.

Ambrose is just the right amount of disconcerting as Dorothy, who fills silences with the false brightness of a TV anchor even as the pain of her trauma fights for air. Free is eerily impassive as Leanne, who is either a shy farm girl or a cunning (and supernaturally supercharged?) manipulator. Rupert Grint is wonderfully brusque as Dorothy's brother Julian, a lout who thinks Leanne is just after the Turners' money.

Most of the action on *Servant* takes place in the Turners' sumptuous home, a claustrophobic choice that compounds the tension in every scene. Shyamalan has said he needs six seasons to tell *Servant*'s story, which feels... inflated. Four episodes in, it's hard to imagine the mystery sustaining beyond a season. Right now, though, the show is delivering the giddy thrills you want from horror: Things are going from bad to worse for the Turner family, and I can't help but enjoy it. **B+**

LIFE IN CRISIS

Superfriends, unite! An inside look at the familiar faces headed to The CW's most ambitious **ARROWVERSE** crossover extravaganza yet, "Crisis on Infinite Earths" (kicking off Dec. 8 at 8 p.m.). BY CHANCELLOR AGARD



↑ The Flash (Grant Gustin), Supergirl (Melissa Benoist), Superman (Tyler Hoechlin), Batwoman (Ruby Rose), and the Atom (Brandon Routh)

SUPERGIRL: DEAN BUSCHER/THE CW; BATWOMAN: DEAN BUSCHER/THE CW; THE FLASH: KATIE YU/THE CW

YOU'D THINK *BLACK LIGHTNING* STAR CRESS WILLIAMS WOULD BE used to seeing other superheroes by now—since his two onscreen daughters (played by Nafessa Williams and China Anne McClain) suit up alongside him every Monday night—but he isn't. In fact, the 49-year-old actor was immediately starstruck when he stepped onto the set of the Arrowverse's forthcoming "Crisis on Infinite Earths" saga for the first time. "It's like going to a new school," says Williams, who took a break from shooting *Black Lightning* in Atlanta to spend a week working on the crossover in Vancouver. "I was just really overwhelmed at the pure number of people, and all of these supersuits. I was working with the Flash, two Supermen, most of the cast of *The Flash*, and some *Arrow* people. It was just a real hodgepodge, a full room." And that's not even the half of it.

This winter's five-hour event marks Black Lightning's formal debut in the Arrowverse, with Williams slated to appear in the *Flash* hour (airing Dec. 10 at 8 p.m.) and the crossover's conclusion, the *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* hour (Jan. 14 at 9 p.m.). Even though *Black Lightning* airs on The CW, its characters have never interacted with the capes of *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *Legends*, and *Batwoman*. "Just watching Cress' character share the screen with these other characters is incredibly exciting because it's never been done before," says crossover executive producer Marc Guggenheim, who is proud that the event

will feature tons of familiar faces from across DC Comics' history on the big and small screen, including some from *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Birds of Prey*, and *Smallville*.

"One of the things that we said very, very early on in the pitches to the studio and network is that this can't be 'Crisis on CW Earths,' " says Guggenheim. "This has to be 'Crisis on *Infinite* Earths,' and we have to touch as many strands of the DC tapestry as possible."

The CW crossover shares its name with Marv Wolfman and George Pérez's epic and game-changing 1985–86 limited comics series that forever altered the DC Universe. Despite some necessary tweaks to the plot, the television version will follow the story's basic outline: The Monitor (LaMonica Garrett) and Harbinger—a.k.a. *Arrow*'s Lyla Michaels (Audrey Marie Anderson)—recruit Green Arrow (Stephen Amell), the Flash (Grant Gustin), Supergirl (Melissa Benoist), and the rest of the Arrowverse's heroes to stop the evil Anti-Monitor (also played by Garrett) from destroying the multiverse.

Given that the fates of multiple worlds hang in the balance, this is an all-hands-on-deck situation, which means there's a natural story reason to include beloved non-Arrowverse characters like an older version of Superman played by *Legends*' Brandon Routh (who portrayed the Man of Steel in 2006's *Superman Returns*) and Black Lightning. "He gets brought in to do something only he can," Williams says of his character. "He's definitely integral to the journey."

Smallville's Tom Welling and Erica Durance will reprise their roles as Clark Kent and Lois Lane in the *Batwoman* installment (Dec. 9 at 8 p.m.). "It's a little bit of a look into their future and the different choices they made to be together. It's a full-circle moment that's really nice," Durance says of her first reunion with Welling since their show ended. "I hadn't seen him for eight years.... It was bizarre [because] it felt like we hadn't missed a beat." As a *Smallville* fan, Guggenheim was delighted seeing them on screen together again: "Every turn, every nuance, every little choice is just so perfect."



↑ *Smallville*'s Lois Lane (Erica Durance) and Clark Kent (Tom Welling) reunite



↙ Pariah (Tom Cavanagh) and Black Lightning (Cress Williams)

"Crisis" will also feature *Batman: The Animated Series* voice actor Kevin Conroy as Bruce Wayne from the future. Considered by some to be the definitive Dark Knight, Conroy has voiced the character for the past 27 years on TV and in animated movies, but this is the first time he'll actually appear on screen. The grizzled Bruce Wayne we meet here isn't the 80-year-old incarnation Conroy played on *Batman Beyond*. "In this, I explore a lot of [the] dark corners of Bruce Wayne," he teases.

Besides paying homage to the many corners of the DCU, the crossover will also have lasting impact on the Arrowverse, in the same way that the *Crisis* comic remade the DCU in the '80s. Although Guggenheim doesn't want to prescribe comparisons to *Avengers: Endgame*, he says, "*Endgame* is an exclamation point. 'Crisis' is a semicolon."

EW ON THE CW For expert analysis, interviews, and scene breakdowns, watch EW's official "Crisis" after-show, *Crisis Aftermath*, airing at 9 p.m., immediately after *Supergirl* (Dec. 8) and *The Flash* (Dec. 10).

What to Watch

Your Guide to December's Best and Buzziest TV

BY DAN SNIERSON



A Very Brady Renovation: Holiday Edition

MON 12.16 • 10PM • HGTV

Here's the story...of a clan named Brady...who will celebrate the newly renovated *Brady Bunch* house while toasting the yuletide spirit. Those no-longer kids from that '70s show cook up gelatinous fruit salad and fondue-style potatoes with Food Network's Ree Drummond and create toy-soldier lawn decorations with HGTV's Jasmine Roth before enjoying a holiday feast without Cousin Oliver.

TUESDAY 12.3

SERIES DEBUT

One Day at Disney

STREAMING • DISNEY+

This docuseries profiles various Disney staffers, but probably not the one who has to Disney-fy the Fox movie library, which will now include *There's Something About Mickey* and *Dude, Where's My Cars 2 DVD?*

How to Train Your Dragon Homecoming

8:30PM • NBC

May we interest you in... [*checks notes*] a Snoggletog holiday festival?

WEDNESDAY 12.4

SERIES DEBUT

Man vs. Bear

9PM • DISCOVERY

When MMA fighters and welders challenge grizzlies to tug-of-war and eating contests, who wins, *really*?



SERIES DEBUT

The Moodys

9PM • FOX

Grinch-approved rage artist Denis Leary forces his grown kids into the holiday spirit by dropping the F-word: festive.

FINAL SEASON PREMIERE

Vikings

9PM • HISTORY

Bye-bye, battle of the beards.

THURSDAY 12.5

SEASON PREMIERE

Project Runway

9:30PM • BRAVO

FRIDAY 12.6

SEASON PREMIERE

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel

STREAMING • AMAZON PRIME

It's 1959, Midge is going on tour, and Sterling K. Brown pops up. Boy, these time jumps on *This Is Us* are really getting crazy.

SERIES DEBUT

Reprisal

STREAMING • HULU

A woman (Abigail Spencer) goes full noir on those who left her for dead.

SUNDAY 12.8



REBOOT PREMIERE

The L Word: Generation Q

10PM • SHOWTIME

Jennifer Beals is back as Bette, who aims to become the first L-word mayor of L.A.

TUESDAY 12.10

Belichick & Saban: The Art of Coaching

9PM • HBO

Football's two most successful coaches reunite to determine which one of them is the bigger curmudgeon. Or maybe they just sit around polishing their rings.

WEDNESDAY 12.18

SERIES DEBUT

Soundtrack

STREAMING • NETFLIX

In this romantic musical drama, Jenna Dewan dances, Madeleine Stowe lip-synchs.

SATURDAY 12.21

Battle of the Christmas Movie Stars

11AM • LIFETIME

Stars from the network's holiday-themed movies compete in holiday-themed challenges (gift-wrapping a costar! ugly-sweater decorating!) to earn the title of Queen/King of Lifetime Christmas. The winner then enters the octagon to fight Hallmark's Lacey Chabert.

Ultimate Hanukkah Challenge

9PM • FOOD NETWORK

Four chefs vie to put the tastiest spin on latkes and brisket. Sounds better than the ultimate Hanukkah challenge in our house, which is eight nights of my mom trying not to criticize the way I light the menorah. ("You're dripping hot wax everywhere!!!")

Saturday Night Live

11:30PM • NBC

Thirty-five years after last hosting the late-night sketch comedy, one of *SNL*'s most famous alums, Eddie Murphy, returns to emcee the Christmas episode, perhaps with Mr. Mister as musical guest.

THURSDAY 12.26

SEASON PREMIERE

YOU

STREAMING • NETFLIX

SATURDAY 12.28

New Year, New Me

8PM • HALLMARK

Aimee Teegarden stars as an overworked morning-show producer who resolves to say yes to every social invitation instead of just cementing herself to her sectional and watching all *40* new Hallmark Christmas movies.

A VERY BRADY RENOVATION: HOLIDAY EDITION: HGTV; THE L WORD: GENERATION Q: HILARY BRONWYN GAYLE/SHOWTIME; THE MOODYS: JONATHAN WENK/FOX

CHECK OUT MORE TV RECOMMENDATIONS AT *EW.COM/WTW* OR FROM OUR "WATCH THIS" DAILY BRIEFING (GOOGLE HOME, AMAZON ALEXA) AND PODCAST (ITUNES, SPOTIFY, GOOGLE PLAY)

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ENTERTAINING WEEKLY

THE 7 BIGGEST FOOD STORIES *of* 2019

FOOD *IS* POP CULTURE, CAPABLE OF SPARKING INTENSE DEBATE, MEDIA MANIA, AND ENTIRE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES. HERE ARE THE DISHES THAT EW'S FOODIES CHEWED ON THIS YEAR. *BY RUTH KINANE*

1. Popeyes' Party Fowl

Folks freaked the cluck out in August when Popeyes' fried chicken sandwich sold out nationwide. The frenzy inspired sexy costumes, ruffled feathers at competitor Chick-fil-A (we prefer our poultry without a side of homophobia anyway), and sadly even incited violence. Guys, there's no excuse to get up in arms/wings about it.

2. Game of Cookies

A rogue coffee cup might've stolen the final season of *GoT*, but as they say in Essos, "All men must dine"—so who can blame Nabisco for releasing Oreos branded with the sigils of the Great Houses? Valar dollar-is.

3. Filmin' Hot Cheetos

The internet understandably giggled at the news that Eva Longoria would direct a film about Flamin' Hot Cheetos (does EVERYTHING need a movie?). But *Flamin' Hot* tells the inspiring true story of the janitor who created the spicy snack and rose to executive-level success. It's kinda like *Good Will Hunting*, minus the math, plus a lot of orange fingers.

4. McDonald's Goes Meatless

It's enough for Burger King to board the plant-based protein train, but the Golden Arches going green with their Beyond Meat P.L.T. means the phenomenon is here to stay...although if the patty is cooked on the same grill as regular meat, isn't it more of a Beside Meat kind of situation?

5. Vacation *Más*

Imagine laying your head on a pillow shaped like a hot-sauce packet as you, a Taco Bell superfan, ponder the life choices that brought you to a summer pop-up hotel in Palm Springs erected by the makers of Nacho Fries. Even crazier: Rooms sold out in two minutes.

6. The Summer of Seltzer

Zima lives! Spiked waters White Claw, Truly, and Bon & Viv battled it out for the affections of millennials, some of whom forgot Koozies and were fined for beach drinking. Turns out "Ain't no laws when drinking White Claws" isn't 100 percent accurate.

7. Give Yourself to the Bright Blue Side, Luke

Disneyland's Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge introduced a blue milk drink that finally gave fans an answer to a 42-year-old question: What did the cup of Bantha milk Luke chugged in *A New Hope* taste like?

COLLINS: JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES; TRIPLE-GINGER COOKIES: MICHÈLE M. WAITE



Bake Like a (Super)natural

SUPERNATURAL STAR **MISHA COLLINS** AND HIS WIFE, VICKI, TEST YOUR STAMINA FOR SPICE WITH THIS TRIPLE-GINGER FALL TREAT FROM THEIR KID-FRIENDLY COOKBOOK, *THE ADVENTUROUS EATERS CLUB*

INGREDIENTS

3 cups	all-purpose flour
1 ½ tsp.	ground ginger
1 tsp.	baking soda
½ tsp.	sea salt
1 cup	unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup	granulated sugar
1 cup	packed light brown sugar
2	large eggs
2 tsp.	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp.	vanilla extract
⅓ cup	chopped crystallized ginger
½ cup	turbinado sugar

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk together flour, ground ginger, baking soda, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Set aside.

2 Beat together butter and sugars until fluffy and light in color. Add eggs one at a time, beating well to incorporate. Fold in grated ginger and vanilla.

3 Add half of the flour mixture to the butter mixture and stir gently until almost all dry ingredients are mixed in. Stir in crystallized ginger and remaining flour mixture until just incorporated.

4 Place turbinado sugar on a plate. Roll 2 tablespoons of the dough into a ball, and then lightly roll in turbinado sugar; place on parchment-paper-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough and sugar, spacing each ball 2 to 3 inches apart. Press down gently with your palm or the bottom of a glass to slightly flatten each ball.

5 Bake in preheated oven until browned around edges, 13 to 15 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to wire racks to cool completely, about 10 minutes.

Makes 24 cookies

→ Recipe adapted from Misha and Vicki Collins' *The Adventurous Eaters Club*





WHO ART YOU?

For a new Under the Cover, our column on album art, **THE WHO**'s Pete Townshend and British Pop artist Sir Peter Blake delve into the design of *WHO*.

BY ALEX SUSKIND

BEFORE HE BECAME AN INSTRUMENT-SMASHING, windmilling rock star, Pete Townshend was a student at Ealing Art College in London, studying kinetic sculpture. Around the same time, he developed an interest in the work of Sir Peter Blake, a British Pop artist who, most famously, designed the cover of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, along with albums for Oasis, Paul Weller, and Eric Clapton.

↑ The cover of the Who's *WHO*

→ Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey

"I was a huge fan," Townshend tells EW of then up-and-comer Blake. "I found him in a book at first and then subsequently met him at an Institute of Contemporary Art exhibition [in 1964]. I'd always had a crush on [his art]. I was thrilled to meet him. He's very gentle."

EDITED BY → ALEX SUSKIND @ALEXJSUSKIND

Fast-forward five decades and Townshend was sitting in Blake's studio in England to ostensibly talk to the artist about designing the cover for the Who's new album, their first since 2006's *Endless Wire*. "This time, it was clear that both of us had aged quite a bit," says the 74-year-old guitarist, chuckling. However, they got a bit off topic. "We didn't discuss anything about the way the artwork should look, just the title, which he liked." Adds Blake, of friends visiting his workplace: "It's happened a couple of times. People have come to the studio, we sit in the little kitchen, and they start to pour their heart out. [Pete and I] must have spoken for three hours."

Despite the freewheeling conversation, it was more than enough to spark an idea for the cover of *WHO*. Working in tandem with graphic designer and frequent collaborator Simon Halfon, Blake came up with a concept based around his series the Sources of Pop Art, which uses imagery once employed by fellow Pop artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. "We knew that we wanted to make these Pop references," says the 87-year-old Blake of getting to design his second Who album (the first being 1981's *Face Dances*). "We decided to go very pointedly for something that was Pop art and was referring back to some of the symbolism I've used over the years."

The approach felt fittingly cyclical. When the Who first started, Blake's influence could be seen splashed across the band's iconography, which was then helmed by Townshend. "He borrowed a lot of imagery that I used, like the [Royal Air Force] target, the Union Jack flag, and a black-and-white diagonal stripe," says Blake. "We'd done it before, so it seemed like a good idea at this point to repeat the process."

For the new album, Blake split the cover into panels, mixing pop culture figures along with nods to famous moments in the Who's history. There's a close-up on a pinball machine, signifying the band's 1969 hit "Pinball Wizard"; there are beans, a direct callback to the group's cover of *The Who Sell Out*, which had lead singer Roger Daltrey sitting in a vat of Heinz baked beans; and there's Eel Pie Island, a small stretch of land in London where Townshend briefly lived and where the Who played a few gigs early on.

The design differs from the approach Blake took on *Face Dances* (Blake's alternate cassette-tape cover is featured in the lower-right panel on *WHO*). That project, which includes lead single "You Better You Bet," showcased four portraits of each band member (Townshend, Roger Daltrey, Kenney Jones, and John Entwhistle) by 16 prominent British artists like David Hockney and Patrick Caulfield. "It was an exciting one to do," says Blake, though he ruefully notes that he wasn't given a budget to pay the artists' fees. "I offered everyone a 50-pound note for expenses, and then Pete offered to put a big party on" (only Francis Bacon turned Blake down).

Townshend ended up loving the cover of *Face Dances*, and was just as effusive when he saw the final version of *WHO*. "We had it ready to go long before we had the album finished, which is not always the case," he says. "And I loved it. I just loved it."

As for Blake, he was happy to get to work with the band again more than 50 years after he first met Townshend and Daltrey at his exhibit. As he tells EW, the collaboration "was almost preordained."



THEO WARGO/GETTY IMAGES FOR POLYDOR RECORDS

Seven Classic Who Covers

PETE TOWNSHEND HAS SOME BRUTALLY HONEST THOUGHTS ON THE BAND'S OLD ARTWORK. (SORRY IN ADVANCE, *WHO'S NEXT*.)
BY ALEX SUSKIND



My Generation The cover is pathetic. It's an example of a new band being guided by a record company who didn't know what the hell we were about. It's just a s---ty little polite [thing].... It's nuts.



The Who Sell Out We had a lot of fun. I think we all loved it. The funniest story attached to it is the fact that we did try to get Heinz to give us some [sponsorship] money and they just sent us baked beans.



Tommy The quality of the artwork [by artist Mike McInnerney] is very, very refined. The way he approached it, it's Magritte-like. It's the kind of thing that's great to look at when you're listening to the music.



Who's Next It's another piece of s---. It's just horrible. It's got no artistic consequence whatsoever. No link to the music. It's meaningless. It's four guys pissing up against a chunk of concrete. I hate it.



Quadrophenia Graham Hughes took a great picture, but it's just gray. The photos inside are really beautiful, so I'm kind of sad about this album cover. I don't think it's great. I think the idea is great.



The Kids Are Alright Photographer Art Kane was fabulous to work with. We did a long session. By the time he took this photo I think one or two of us might have fallen asleep. It was cold, so the flag kept us warm.



Face Dances Peter Blake commissioned these incredible British artists to produce panels. They did it fantastically quickly. I think it's wonderful. The cover is much, much, much better than the music.

A Very Merr-iah Christmas

WE WON'T EVEN WISH FOR SNOW, JUST AN INTERVIEW WITH **MARIAH CAREY** TO CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF HER MODERN HOLIDAY CLASSIC "ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU." *BY ALEX SUSKIND*



Q + A

You've become the patron saint of officially informing the public when it's time to get into the holiday spirit. Are you fully in it right now, or is it something you still need to warm up to?
We released the deluxe edition of *Merry Christmas* [this month]. So, obviously, I had to get into that spirit [early]. I personally like to wait till after Thanksgiving to really get gung-ho.

***Merry Christmas* and its lead single, "All I Want for Christmas Is You," turn 25 this year. Does the anniversary of the song matter much to you, especially when it now feels so ingrained in the holiday season?**
I rebuke time. I have a thing where I just live outside the traditional realm of how we measure [it]. So in that way, Santa and myself are very similar. But I'm excited about the 25th anniversary. It's like everything coming together to give the song a celebratory moment.



Was there a specific point when you realized "All I Want for Christmas Is You" became part of the Christmas lexicon?
The British Royal Navy did something where an entire shipload of [people] sang each part of the song. It was such an amazing thing to see happen. I've seen videos of people in Holland during the middle of summer screaming "All I Want" at the top of their lungs. But the main thing is when people come to me and say, "We love 'All I Want for Christmas.' We listen to it all year long."

Which is funny since you were initially hesitant about putting out your first Christmas album.
That is true, and that's because it was so early in my career. I didn't feel, from a strategic point



CAREY: DENNIS LEUPOLD; SANTA CLAUS AND CAREY: JAMES DEVANEY/WIREIMAGE

of view, that it was time to do something like that. As much as I love Christmas, I thought that the record company was off. Obviously, I couldn't have been more wrong.

What do you remember about writing and recording the song?
I wrote the beginning and the middle on the keyboard in a little house in Upstate New York, in a room by myself. I just started thinking about all things Christmas and growing up as a kid that loves Christmas. I think that's why it's such a festive record. Somebody said the other day, "It's the saddest Christmas song ever, because you're like, 'I don't care about all these things. I just want this other person.' " And I guess that was my thing. I wanted to put a love twist onto a Christmas song, two of my favorite things in the world.... I don't usually start writing on the piano. I'm not a piano player. But sometimes the biggest songs for me come [from] just sitting down at the piano and messing around. So I brought it to [co-writer Walter Afanasieff]. I had already written most of the song, and we worked on the bridge and produced it together.

Some of the song's best moments are the background vocals. You of course sing lead when performing, but have you ever had an urge to do the "and I"s instead?
Doing background vocals is one my favorite things. I got my first paying job as a singer when I was 12, singing background vocals in a session I walked to by myself. When I listen to "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which is only at Christmastime, and it goes into that outro [harmonies]... to me, that's the happiest part of the song.... I usually sing the "and I"s when we're just celebrating Christmas [at home].

You must get a ton of requests to use the song in film and TV. But *Love Actually* is one of the few that it's in. How do you decide what is worthy for inclusion?
Love Actually happened early in the song's life. And I'm happy I did that. But I've been very selective about what I allow the song to be a part of because it really matters to me. I don't want to give it to anybody. It's not about the person. It's just, is this the right look?

The song is one of the best-selling singles of all time, which makes it your most successful, commercially speaking. Do you consider it your most successful from a songwriting standpoint?
As a songwriter, I look at some of those songs from *Butterfly*, or "Looking In" from *Daydream*, or "My Saving Grace" from *Charmbracelet*, where I know how deep I went as a writer. But "All I Want for Christmas Is You" gives me a feeling of happiness I can't describe, so it's a different thing. Yes, it's a hugely successful song. Do I think it's the best song that I've ever written? I don't know how to judge that. [But] it has its own place for me.



↖ Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" is one of the best-selling singles of all time

← The original cover to Carey's 1994 album *Merry Christmas*

→ Carey has been doing her annual Christmas tour since 2014



THE PLAYBACK

Mary J. Blige *HERstory Vol. 1*

EW'S RUNDOWN OF NOTABLE BOX SETS, COMPILATIONS, AND REISSUES.
BY SARAH RODMAN

Sometimes great things come in ho-hum packages. This musically rich, design-poor box features eight standard-weight black seven-inch vinyl versions of Mary J. Blige's early-'90s singles—biggies like "What's the 411?" and "Reminisce"—and their accompanying remixes. It will likely be catnip to MJB completists and vinyl newbies interested in the classic remixes not previously collected in one place and out of print in physical formats. (For those wary of flipping sides every few minutes, the box also comes in single-CD and two-LP versions.) Given Blige's stature and the importance of these songs to her ascension to the throne of Queen of Hip-Hop Soul, the lack of original artwork or accompanying booklet contextualizing the tunes is a bummer. But both the original songs and club mixes—from the Biggie-assisted "Real Love" to the Morse-code bloops of "Be Happy"—remain killers. B–



← Mary J. Blige's *HERstory Vol. 1* features rare remixes

The Riff

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE have planned a series of reunion shows ahead of the 2020 election. But can their message cut through the noisy rhetoric? BY ALEX SUSKIND

A COMMON THREAD FOLLOWING THE election of Donald Trump in 2016 was that widespread unrest would lead to a return to the glory days of protest music—of artists like Bob Dylan and John Lennon. So it should be the perfect time for the recently announced 2020 reunion of Rage Against the Machine, who last performed in 2011 (back when Barack Obama was in office, Walter White was alive, and everyone was still drinking from plastic straws). The quartet will play shows along the U.S.-Mexico border before heading to Coachella. But will people listen to what they have to say?

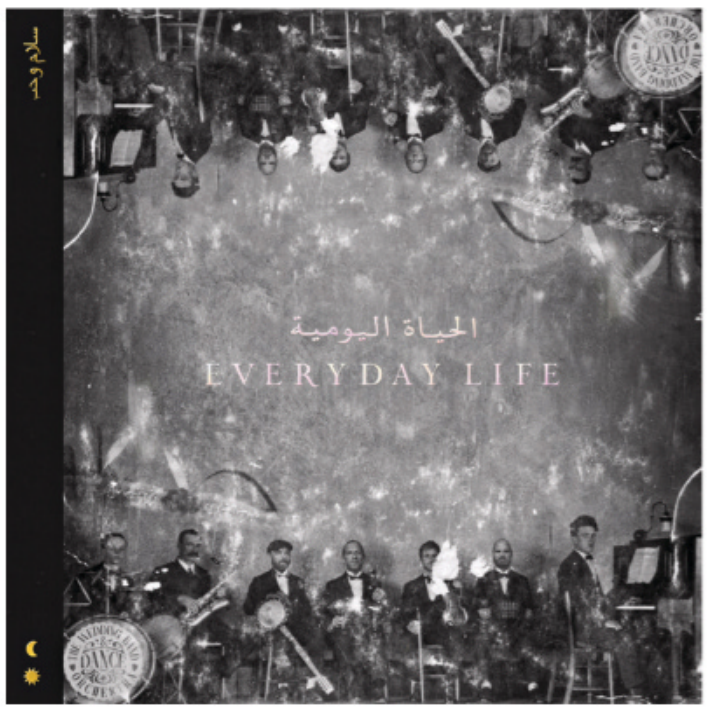
Recent protest efforts—Eminem's "The Storm," Childish Gambino's "This Is America," Kendrick Lamar's "XXX," and Fiona Apple's "Tiny Hands"—have made ripples tackling current events, but these acts of dissent are one-off moments versus career-long missions. However, Rage Against the Machine were specifically founded as a political endeavor; it's right there in the name. Previously, the band stormed the NYSE with a guerrilla video shoot and walked on stage in Guantánamo Bay prisoner garb. Their songs tackled the plight of homelessness, the proliferation of guns, and political strife—all issues that certainly remain today (and likely even provoked the group out of retirement).

Yet grabbing anyone's attention right now is almost impossible. There's a flood of information, and messages either get lost in the shuffle or are purposefully obscured. Political laments and calls to action in the '60s made headlines thanks to a highly charged electorate and a smaller media pool serving a less-distracted audience; the countercultural-movement echoes in the '90s were part of the reason Rage were able to rise to mainstream prominence. Now, the band is looking to kick-start something new at a time when grabbing even a few minutes of people's time is an uphill battle. Can a band known for making noise cut through noise? In the face of a diffuse media landscape, Rage are gonna come with it now, regardless.



→ **From left** Fiona Apple, Zack de la Rocha, Tom Morello, Kendrick Lamar

BLIGE: TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES; APPLE: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE CHRIS CORNELL ESTATE; DE LA ROCHA: BARRY BRECHEISEN/WIREIMAGE; MORELLO: SCOTT DUDELSON/WIREIMAGE; LAMAR: THOMAS COOPER/GETTY IMAGES



Coldplay

ALBUM	*Everyday Life*
LABEL + GENRE	Parlophone/Atlantic Rock
REVIEW BY	Maura Johnston @maura

COLDPLAY'S DEBUT *PARACHUTES* turns 20 next year, and the band's eighth full-length, *Everyday Life*, does have a sense of reckoning about it. Billed as a double album (there are 16 tracks), it's a sprawling, questioning record from a group clearly dismayed by the crueler ways of the world—but it's not entirely lacking in hope.

Though bursting with thoughts on modern living, *Everyday Life* also has the big-tent pop moments that made Coldplay one of the 21st century's most reliable arena acts. "Church" recalls the churning splendor of *Viva la Vida*; "Champion of the World" sounds ready-made for inspirational highlight reels, its refracted guitars gleaming like the moon that's likely been conjured in listeners' heads by Chris Martin's *E.T.* references.

Other songs use found sounds to make their lyrical points more explicit. "Trouble in Town" is moody and foreboding, its galloping drums underscoring Martin's descriptions of societal strife; as it builds to a frenzy, a 2013 audio clip of Philadelphia police harassing citizens comes in. "Arabesque," meanwhile, includes a coolly delivered testimony on the history-altering power of music, which gives way to a horn solo by Nigerian activist-musician Femi Kuti that's intercut with his father, Afrobeat legend Fela, asserting that "Music is the weapon of the future." When the band takes a breath, the emotionalism expands. "Guns" finds Martin gasping for air, decrying a world where answers to everything lie in acquiring more guns.

The title track and album closer mirrors one path out of existential crises, kicking off with the very au courant question "What in the world are we going to do?" At the song's end, the music drops out—but start the album over and the opening drones of "Sunrise" resolve its final chord. It's a shrewd reminder that the only way out of turmoil is through—and a canny invitation to hit replay on this catchy, curveball-filled record. **B+**

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EYES on the PRIZE

IT ISN'T JUST THE OSCAR RACE THAT'S HEATING UP. NOMINATIONS FOR THE BIGGEST AWARDS IN BOOKS ARE COMING IN FAST. WE BREAK DOWN ALL THE TITLES GOING FOR THE LITERARY GOLD. *BY DAVID CANFIELD*

AWARDS SEASON LOVES A GOOD CONTROVERSY, AND THAT doesn't just go for Hollywood. This fall, amid the frenzy of festival premieres and guild screenings and early Oscar prediction lists, no one has courted a backlash quite like the judges for the Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious awards for English-language...books. The 2019 panel named two winners for the first time in 27 years—a literary icon (Margaret Atwood) and a relative unknown (Bernardine Evaristo)—and observers were not pleased. "You had one job," *Washington Post* critic Ron Charles tweeted; "What Happened?" cried a headline in the local *Times Literary Supplement*. To Oscar watchers, this may feel like a small drama. But to book lovers, it's the marker of the beginning to their own twisty cycle of wins and losses, upsets and snubs. Here's a cheat sheet to get you in on the fun.

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Let's start with Atwood's **The Testaments**, her Booker-winning sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. In topping the *New York Times* best-seller list and getting a very splashy rollout akin to Michelle Obama's *Becoming*, the novel at first seemed like more of a commercial play. But as with a *Black Panther* or *Get Out* on the movies side, sometimes that popular success translates to hardware, too. It's a prescient read, not unlike the rest of the novels dominating the conversation: Colson Whitehead's Jim Crow-era **The Nickel Boys** Valeria Luiselli's family border drama **Lost Children Archive**, and Laila Lalami's immigration-focused

EDITED BY → DAVID CANFIELD @DAVIDCANFIELD97

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN SNOOK

crime saga **The Other Americans** have all scored at least two nods from among the National Book Award, the leading U.S. literary prize; the consensus-driven Carnegie Medal; and the relatively quirky—Golden Globe-esque?—Kirkus Prize.

THE INGENUE

Sally Rooney is riding a very long awards tail for her sophomore novel, **Normal People**. The 28-year-old Irish superstar was nominated for *last* year's Booker Prize, given the time of the book's U.K. release, and is up for this season's Carnegie Medal. (Note: Non-American authors are ineligible for the NBA.) Her trajectory feels a little like J. Law's at the height of her breakout: Will there ever be a time when she *isn't* up for something?

THE RULE BREAKERS

A pair of audacious debuts may read unconventionally, but voters are embracing their originality. Ocean Vuong's **On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous**, autofiction formatted as an intimate letter to the protagonist's (illiterate) mother, is an unexpected powerhouse, finding love across the board; Julia Phillips' **Disappearing Earth**, a literary thriller composed of linked short stories, is an NBA finalist. And we should include (co–)Booker winner Evaris to here, too: For her novel **Girl, Woman, Other**, a bold meditation on race and gender (see review), she became the first black woman to ever receive the prize—partly why her split with Atwood was met with such strong criticism.

THE SNUBS

No awards season is complete without the unjustly ignored. Similar to film snobbery, genre bias persists here: Ted Chiang's sci-fi collection **Exhalation** and Helen Phillips' horror novel **The Need** deserve better. And whither Elizabeth McCracken's bizarro American epic **Bowlaway**? Was it released too early, like so many Oscar near-contenders? Consider this our official FYC.

Fiction Reviews



Girl, Woman, Other

AUTHOR
Bernardine Evaristo

PAGES
452

A SURPRISE CO-WINNER of the 2019 Booker Prize (see opposite page), Evaristo may hardly be a household name, but *Girl* deserves every accolade, and more. Her sixth novel is a creative and technical marvel—a sprawling, unpunctuated, and improbably joyful account of 12 interconnected characters (some young, some old, one nonbinary; hence the title) in modern-day Britain. Radical lesbian playwrights and fierce nonagenarian homesteaders; glossy-haired bankers and ground-down maids; rebellious teenagers and retired housewives: They all come together in a book so bursting with wit, empathy, and insight, its clear-eyed reflections on race and feminism hardly ever feel like polemics; there's too much pure, vivid life on every page. **A–** *—Leah Greenblatt*



The Sacrament

AUTHOR
Olaf Olafsson

PAGES
304

AN UNSPECIFIED CRIME at a small Catholic school in Reykjavik; a young French nun sent to investigate; a cold case that hopscotches across decades: The latest from Olafsson (*Walking Into the Night*) feels at first like a classic study in Scandi noir, that austere genre of frosty characters and snow-flecked mystery. But something more tender and ephemeral lurks beneath *Sacrament*'s bare outlines—particularly in its reticent narrator, who turned to God, we learn, not so much out of deep faith or devotion but out of a terrible shame. Moving in clean declarative prose between '60s Paris, '80s Iceland, and the modern day, the novel's core temperature sometimes runs too cool; there's real devastation, though, in the revelations of its final chapters, and freedom, too. **B** *—LG*



On Swift Horses

AUTHOR
Shannon Pufahl

PAGES
306

IN BOOMING POSTWAR America, what does it mean to want? In the tradition of '50s-set classics like *Revolutionary Road* and *Far From Heaven*, Pufahl's tender, melancholy debut locks eyes on big-hearted characters left adrift in an era of prosperity and conformity: Muriel, a newly married housewife in San Diego, and her brother-in-law Julius, a gay man searching for liberation in Las Vegas. The two share a silent connection that persists, even as fate separates them. They gamble, they love, they yearn for something better. The glacial plot casts its own spell, wandering around with two beautifully broken souls determined to find meaning—find themselves—in a world that often doesn't seem to give a damn. **B+** *—DC*



AUTHOR ISA MAZZEI

CAM ARTIST

ISA MAZZEI has already written a horror movie based on her experiences in the sex industry. Now she's revealing all about performing online in the memoir *Camgirl*. BY CLARK COLLIS

IN HIGH SCHOOL, ISA MAZZEI HAD an unusual daydream. "In my fantasies I was like, 'Oh, I would love to be the madam of a brothel, but in the Wild West,' " she says.

Mazzei has yet to fulfill that particular fantasy, but she's become familiar with the sex industry in her own way. Starting in 2014, she spent almost two years "camming"—entertaining and undressing for viewers on a streaming site. Mazzei, 28, was inspired by that experience to write the screenplay for last year's horror film *Cam* and has now detailed her time performing for an internet "room" of admirers in her new memoir, *Camgirl*.

"I really want to help normalize and destigmatize this industry," she says. "When I was working as a cam girl, people would decide things about me before they met me, and then they'd say, 'Oh my God, but you're such a normal person!' And I'm like, 'Yeah, sex workers are normal people.' "

Mazzei grew up in Boulder, Colo., with a cinematographer father and makeup-artist mother. "In high school, I owned the identity of being 'the slutty one,' " she says. "I would take my clothes off at parties. I'd brag about how many people I had kissed. I developed this fascination with sex work, because it seemed like this place where it was okay to express those parts of yourself."

In addition to her brothel-managing dreams, Mazzei fantasized about becoming a writer and studied comparative literature at UC Berkeley, before returning to Boulder with no idea about what to do with her life. "I was trying to find myself, and throwing myself at jobs, and just being brutally unhappy," she says. "I kept coming back to this idea of sex work."

Mazzei began camming under the pseudonym Una. She admits there were times when her new job was frightening—"There were a couple of experiences that felt violating, for sure"—but mostly Mazzei found it an empowering experience. "As a woman, it becomes normal to get catcalled

↑ Alice (Madeline Brewer) in a scene from *Cam*, written by Mazzei

CAM GIRL: NETFLIX; MAZZEI: CAITLIN FULLAM

I TRIED TO BE MATTER-OF-FACT ABOUT SEX WORK. IT'S A JOB!"
—ISA MAZZEI

on the street or feel like someone is going to grab me in a bar," she says. "Camming was the first space where I had really clear boundaries that I could set and enforce."

Being a cam girl also helped Mazzei come to terms with a sexual trauma she suffered as a child and had struggled to process. "Camming was healing because it was this space where I had agency over my body," she says. "It took feeling I was safe to be able to confront that trauma safely."

Mazzei stopped performing partly to write *Cam*, which was directed by a filmmaker friend from Boulder, Daniel Goldhaber. Starring Madeline Brewer (*The Handmaid's Tale*, *Hustlers*) as a cam girl battling an online doppelgänger, the movie was released last year to rave reviews. It was while working on the film that Mazzei decided to write a book that would describe the reality of her life as a cam girl, which was often far from erotic. "It was the hardest job I've ever had," she says. "It's all-consuming all the time. It's not just the time you spend streaming online, it's the emails you're answering, the Snapchats you have to send; it's the costumes, and the lingerie, and the props, and the games you have to prepare to make sure you're not boring people."

Mazzei and Goldhaber currently have two more films in development, and the writer has plans for another memoir. "I really want to share what happens next," Mazzei says, "the process of accepting childhood trauma and the things that literally happened [next] in my life. I feel like *Camgirl* ends at the beginning."



Jimmy Kimmel

THE LATE-NIGHT HOST PROVES WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER WITH HIS DEBUT AS AN AUTHOR (AND ILLUSTRATOR), ***THE SERIOUS GOOSE*** (OUT DEC. 3)—AND HELPS CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS ALONG THE WAY. *BY MAUREEN LEE LENKER*

Q + A

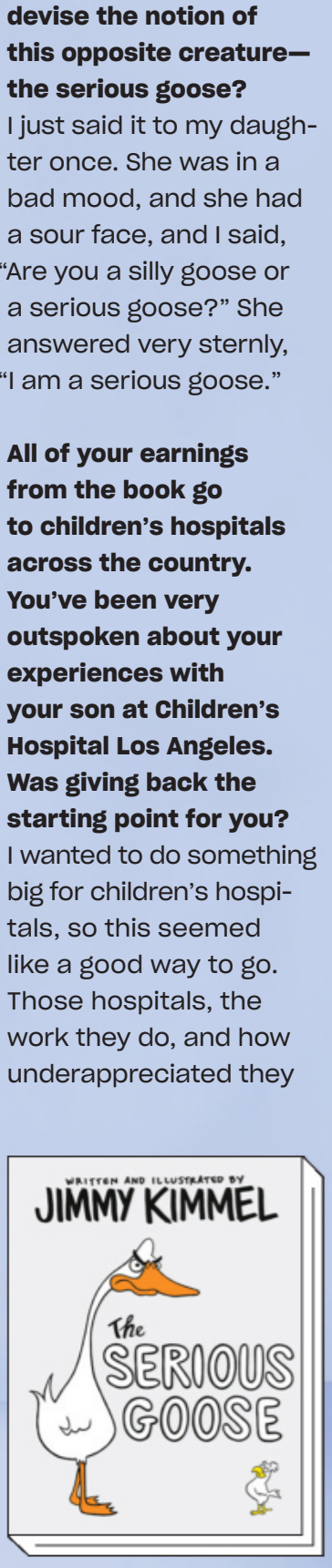
Everyone knows the phrase "silly goose," but when did you first devise the notion of this opposite creature—the serious goose?
I just said it to my daughter once. She was in a bad mood, and she had a sour face, and I said, "Are you a silly goose or a serious goose?" She answered very sternly, "I am a serious goose."

All of your earnings from the book go to children's hospitals across the country. You've been very outspoken about your experiences with your son at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Was giving back the starting point for you?
I wanted to do something big for children's hospitals, so this seemed like a good way to go. Those hospitals, the work they do, and how underappreciated they are, is actually shocking to me. It's great to raise awareness and money. No matter what side you're on, [who] doesn't support donating to children's hospitals?

Are there other ways in which your experiences with your children directly influenced or inspired this book?
One of the most important things you can do is read to your children. Feeding them, then reading to them. My kids demand book after book after book, so I look for books that are short. Based on that experience, I wanted to write a book that was one you could read to your kids in five minutes. Bedtime sometimes takes a long time.

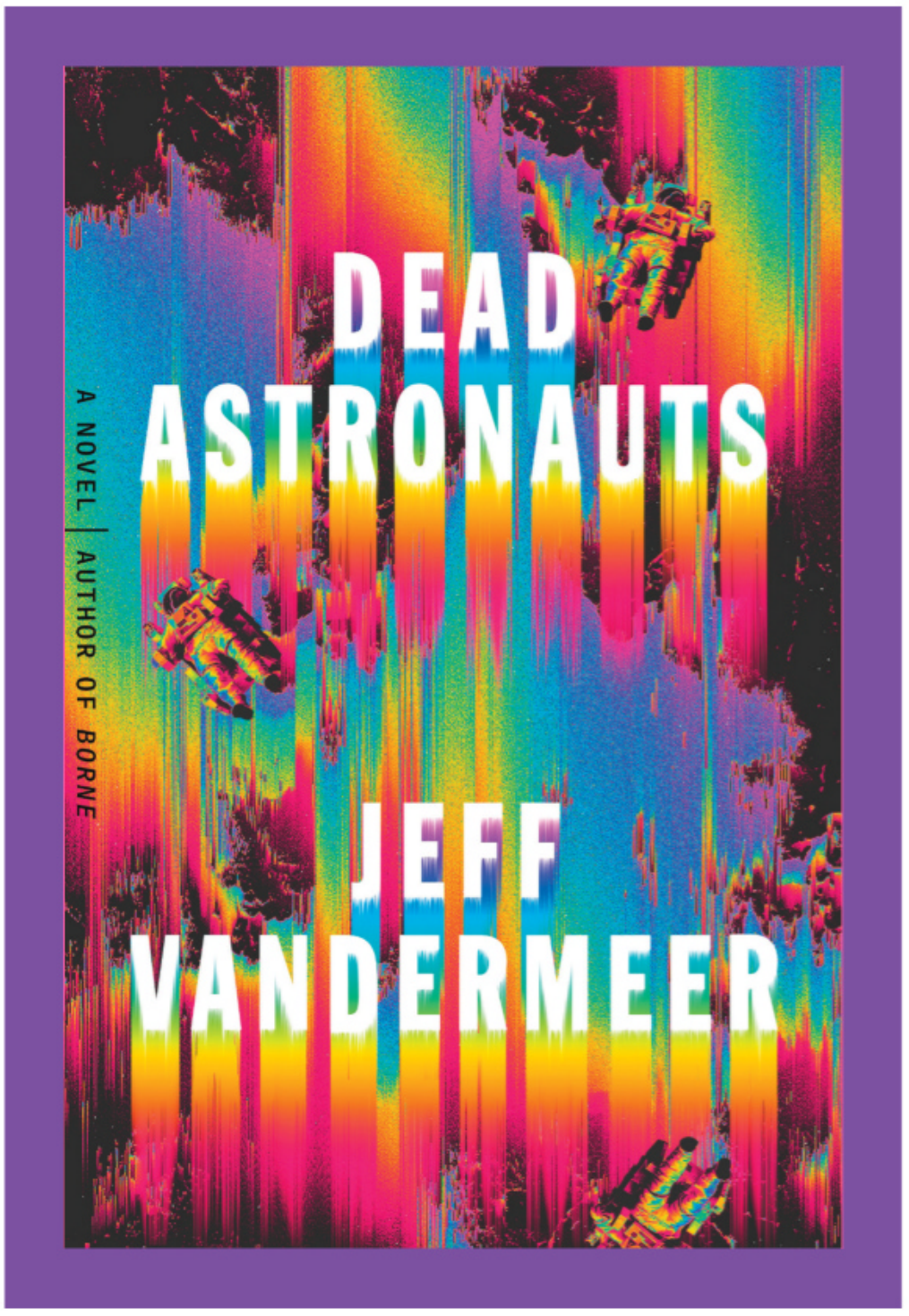
What was it like getting to jump back into what was a former dream career path for you and do the illustrations?
It is what I wanted to do: be an artist of some kind. But the sad thing that you realize when you set out to tackle a project like this is that you're not as good as you could've been. I slaved over it. I don't know how to use Photoshop, so I did everything on paper. If I screwed up, I'd start over again. I just kept drawing over and over and over again until I had it. The hard part was the lettering, really.

How did you hit on the design of the goose?
I bought a bunch of books about geese. I printed their pictures out off the internet. Another thing I learned is that a goose is a female, so that *goose* is not a he, it is a she. Because *gander* is a male. I really went to extreme lengths to try to find the right type of goose. Ultimately, it's an amalgamation of a lot of different varieties of goose. I even bought a book about the care and feeding of geese. You know when Christian Bale prepares for an acting role? That's what I did [with geese].





ERIC RAY DAVIDSON/TRUNK ARCHIVE



Borne to Be Wild

ANNIHILATION AUTHOR **JEFF VANDERMEER** RETURNS TO THE POSTAPOCALYPTIC BORNE UNIVERSE WITH A WONDERFUL—AND DEEPLY WEIRD—NEW NOVEL. *BY CLARK COLLIS*

IN HIS 2017 NOVEL *BORNE*, JEFF VANDERMEER introduced readers to a scenario every bit as dangerous—if also, at times, as wondrous—as the flesh-mutating Area X at the heart of his beloved Southern Reach trilogy. (The first installment, *Annihilation*, was the basis for a 2018 film starring Natalie Portman.) The dystopian tale tracked Rachel, a young scavenger who's raising Borne, a shape-changing creature, while evading assorted types of killer biotech (including an enormous flying bear) created by a sinister "Company." *Borne* also introduced a mystery in the ghoulish form of three corpses, buried in the ground to their rib cages. Rachel initially assumes them to be "dead astronauts," but they turn out to be a trio of unfortunate souls who died wearing contamination suits.

Dead Astronauts, a prequel and VanderMeer's first book since the *Annihilation* film premiered, identifies the threesome as a space traveler named Grayson and two humanoid (but nonhuman) results of the Company's routinely cruel experiments: Chen, who can see into the future and is in a perpetual fight against his own physical dissolution (at one point in the story becoming a "mound of writhing green salamanders"), and Moss, who can open doors to different dimensions and is literally made from moss. VanderMeer describes this devotedly intertwined trio's attempts to destroy the Company across an array of realities. During their quest, they encounter powerful animal entities also referenced in *Borne*, such as a telepathic blue fox and a monstrous duck with a broken wing.

Then things start getting *really* weird.

In the latter two-thirds of *Dead Astronauts*, VanderMeer continues to explore the Borne universe from the viewpoints of other inhabitants, including the blue fox, the monstrous duck, and a leviathan. He even visits "our" world—or one very much like it—and follows the travails of a homeless woman who discovers a journal written by a Company scientist and transforms after she is vomited upon by a salamander (does this guy love salamanders!).

The conceit can be trying. Several chapters consist of sentence clusters repeated over and over again: "They killed me. They brought me back. They killed me. They brought me back...." Certainly, some readers may miss the (relatively) straightforward weirdness of *Borne*. But the vivid and, at times, genuinely moving *Dead Astronauts* ranks as a successful experiment—definitely more successful than much of the deranged biological tinkering it depicts. **B**

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THIS MONTH'S HITS & MISSES

The Bullseye

BY ➜ MARC SNETIKER @MARCSNETIKER



Clueless TV reboot to follow disappearance of Cher, not to be confused with the *Billboard* pop charts between 2001 and 2013.



Cardi B joins *Fast & Furious 9*, in case you wonder why all the car engines suddenly go "Okurrr."





Guess who WON'T be directing *Avengers V: Age of Pesci*.



Elton John trashes Disney's *The Lion King* remake. We can't print what he said, but it definitely did not end in "Matata."





Rare sighting of *The Aeronauts* attempting to get to the Oscars by February



Mr. Robot airs mostly vocal-free episode, inspired in part by Rami Malek's *Bohemian Rhapsody* performance.



Meet the potential new villains of *The Batman* and faces of L'Oréal Gotham.



Little Women finally saves Amy March. (Beth, still not so much.)



Lice is no longer the only *Parasite* that will follow you home from the movie theater.



Watchmen's best display of chemistry since Doctor Manhattan



Ford v Ferrari is almost as thrilling as when you find out neither of them is playing Ford or Ferrari.



Billie Eilish says she's haunted by the pressure of her next album, which must be a nice change of pace from a small Victorian child.



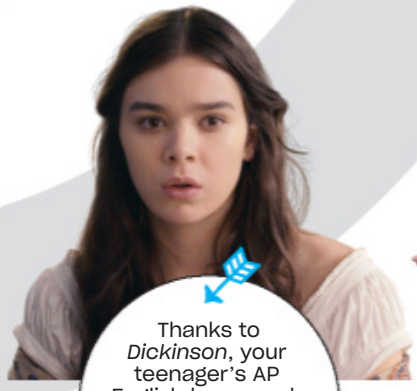
Hugh Hefner's son marries actress Scarlett Byrne; fortunately the Playboy Mansion carries a cream for that.



Out: *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*.
In: *Comedians with Jane Fonda Getting Arrested*



Things at *Sesame Street*'s 50th were perfectly tame until *someone* insisted on birthday shots.



Thanks to *Dickinson*, your teenager's AP English homework has never been easier. Or more profoundly incorrect.



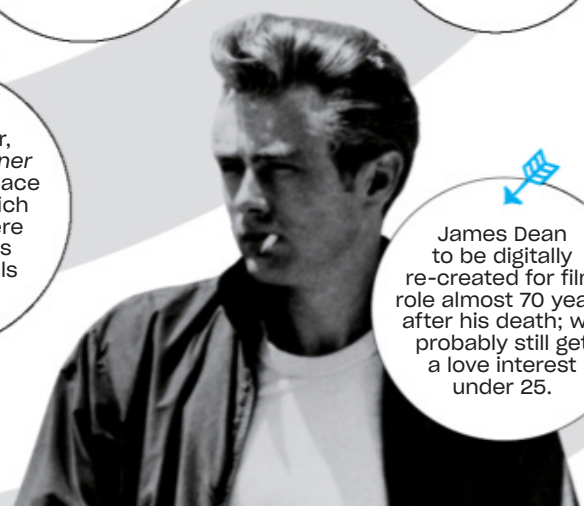
As Shaggy learned, the downside of doing a live musical is not being able to say it wasn't you.



Introducing the worst Christmas movie you'll watch every December for the rest of your life



After November, 1982's *Blade Runner* no longer takes place in the future, which explains why there aren't any shots of Trump officials in prison.



James Dean to be digitally re-created for film role almost 70 years after his death; will probably still get a love interest under 25.

THE AERONAUTS: AMAZON STUDIOS; *THE LION KING*: DISNEY; JOHN: DANIELE VENTURELLI/GETTY IMAGES; *LITTLE WOMEN*: WILSON WEBB/SONY; *PARASITE*: NEON; *FORD V FERRARI*: MERRICK MORTON/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX (2); EILISH: TIM MOSENFELDER/FILMMAGIC; *SESAME STREET*: JESSE GRANT/HBO; *DICKINSON*: APPLE; *THE LITTLE MERMAID LIVE*: ERIC MCCANDLESS/ABC; *BLADE RUNNER*: WARNER BROS/EVERETT COLLECTION; *LAST CHRISTMAS*: JONATHAN PRIME/UNIVERSAL; HEFNER AND BYRNE: STEVEN FERDMAN/GETTY IMAGES; FONDA: BILL CLARK/CQ-ROLL CALL INC/GETTY IMAGES; *WATCHMEN*: MARK HILL /HBO (2); *MR. ROBOT*: PETER KRAMER/USA NETWORK; COLIN FARRELL: GREGG DEGUIRE/FILMMAGIC; ZOE KRAVITZ: DIA DIPASUPIL/GETTY IMAGES; PAUL DANO: GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN SCORSESE: SANTIAGO FELIPE/GETTY IMAGES; *IRON MAN*: ZADE ROSENTHAL/PARAMOUNT; CARDI B: RANDALL MICHELSON/GETTY IMAGES FOR IGNITE; *THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS*: UNIVERSAL/EVERETT COLLECTION; *CLUELESS*: ELLIOTT MARKS/PARAMOUNT



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